The Business of Salvation

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THE BUSINESS OF SALVATION

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PREFATORY NOTE

The following more or less unusual presentation of a rather familiar subject was suggested by a series of discourses, which the author was called upon to deliver in the St. Louis Cathedral, during the Lent of 1911. The audience was, to a large extent, composed of business men, who gathered there during the noon hour, and for six long weeks followed the course of instruction day after day with the closest attention. It is to this circumstance that the present treatise owes its somewhat novel form. It places the work of salvation on a strict business basis, taking due account of Capital and Interest, of Gain and Loss, and all the various Risks involved in Business Enterprises.

From this it must, however, not be inferred that its appeal is only to those men and women who are engaged in business strictly so called. To a certain extent we are all business men or business women, and we are sufficiently familiar with the methods and purposes of the business world to draw therefrom most valuable lessons for the successful carrying on of the one really important business of our lives. Hence, kind reader, whoever

you be, the following pages were written for you; and if you will but read them with that serious attention which the importance of the subject demands, they will open up for you a source of revenue that shall never fail.

BERNARD J. OTTEN, S. J.

Feast of Our Lady's Nativity, 1911.

CONTENTS

I

AN IMPORTANT UNDERTAKING

PAGE

A Business Proposition 3
"Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice."

Capital 10
"What exchange shall a man give for his soul?"

Rate of Profits 17
"An hundred times as much, now in this time."

Net Gain 24
"In the world to come life everlasting."

Neglect of Business 31
"I went and hid thy talent in the earth."

Failure 38
"The wages of sin is death."

Taking Counsel 46
"The prudent man doth all things with counsel."

II

MEANS AND METHODS

Trade Conditions 55
"The law is good, if a man use it lawfully."

Business Methods 62
"The just man liveth by faith."

PAGE

FAIR PROSPECTS 69
"He is the God of my help, and my hope is in God."

SPECIAL INDUCEMENTS 76
"The charity of Christ presseth us."

PRUDENT WAYS 84
"The knowledge of the holy is prudence."

JUST MEASURE 92
"Justice is perpetual and immortal."

TEMPERATE HABITS 100
"He that is temperate shall prolong life."

RESOLUTE AND BRAVE 108
"Finally, brethren, be strengthened in the Lord."

FURTHER HELPS 116
"I have laid help upon one that is mighty."

III

THEORY AND PRACTICE

BUSINESS STANDARD 125
"I endeavor to have always a conscience without offence."

APPRENTICESHIP 133
"As the days of thy youth, so also shall thy old age be."

LEISURE MOMENTS 142
"Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly."

A MODEL AND GUIDE 151
"I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

A SPECIALTY 159
"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."

CHARACTER 167
"That the man of God may be perfect."

STRESS AND STRAIN 175
"With Christ I am nailed to the cross."

PAGE

OBSTACLES 183
"If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

IV

BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS

READY CASH 193
"Our sufficiency is from God."

SUBSIDIES 201
"Ask, and it shall be given you."

A FULL DAY 208
"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God."

SPECULATIONS 216
"Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human."

DAMAGES 224
"In many things we all offend."

A RASH VENTURE 232
"Know thou, and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God."

REORGANIZED 240
"The wickedness of the wicked shall not hurt him, in what day soever he shall turn from his wickedness."

V

ASSOCIATIONS

CHURCH ALLEGIANCE 249
"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations."

SECURITIES 256
"I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

PAGE

LOYALTY 264
"In what place soever thou shalt be, . . . there will thy servant be."

CIVIC OBLIGATIONS 271
"There is no power but from God."

DOMESTIC INTERESTS 278
"If any man hath not care of his own and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith."

LIFE PARTNERSHIP 285
"What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

PRECAUTIONS 293
"Which of you having a mind to build a tower, doth not first sit down and reckon the charges?"

HEART UNION 300
"One body and one Spirit; . . . One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

DISORDERS 308
"Woe is me for my destruction, my wound is very grievous."

VI

ECONOMIC QUESTIONS

COMMUNISM 319
"All things were common unto them."

FUNDAMENTALS 327
"Fill the earth, and subdue it."

CLASS DIVISION 336
"But now there are many members indeed, yet one body."

UTOPIAN DREAMS 344
"Neither was there any one needy among them."

PAGE

SOCIAL UNREST 354
"Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate."

CAPITALISM 361
"Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity."

FAIR WAGE 370
"The laborer is worthy of his hire."

A BUSINESS PROPOSITION

"Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice." MATTH. VI, 33.

Most of us are in one way or another, directly or indirectly, connected with some business enterprise. Some are actively engaged therein, devoting to it the strength of their bodies and the energy of their souls; others lend it their financial support, advancing the Capital or buying the Product. We live in an age when business is supreme, and in a country where business capacity wields greater power than any king upon his throne. Business is the watchword of the day. There is little room in our modern society for the gentleman of leisure; little room too for the butterfly of fashion. It is men of energy and women of serious purpose that the economic conditions of the modern world are calling for, and in the majority of cases they are the ones who carry off the prize of social eminence.

Whether this is as it ought to be matters little for the present. It is a fact, and facts must be accepted as they are. This is an age of business interests, and in consequence an age of unprecedented material progress. There is progress round about

us in every phase of our material existence; the very air we breathe is instinct with its spirit. There is progress in the arts and sciences; progress in mechanical devices and industrial methods; progress in all that leads to the accumulation of wealth and the enjoyment of comforts. The spirit of progress hovers over land and sea, everywhere calling into action man's latent powers, everywhere scattering broadcast its blessings and its curses, and in every onward move throbbing in quick response to the business instinct of the age.

Truly, business is the watchword of the day, and we are carried hither and thither by its ever recurring ebb and flow; now borne aloft, it may be, on the crest of some mighty wave of success to the haven of prosperity, now again dragged down into its deep trough to the very bottom of financial ruin. Yet it is business all, and business is the watchword of the day.

In view of this, it can hardly appear inappropriate to make business the subject of a discussion which points to the acquisition of a treasure that no money can buy. It is a theme of vital interest to all; a theme with which all are more or less familiar, and yet which, in this connection at least, does not lack the attraction born of change. It is a business course, kind reader, that will be more profitable to you than any other which you may ever have had

occasion to follow. Hence if you are at all in touch with the spirit of this age and country, you can hardly fail to seize this excellent opportunity of making a profitable investment.

I must, however, at the very outset remind you of the fact that there are two main lines of business which require your serious consideration, although perhaps most of our modern business men confine their attention so exclusively to the one that they seem to be scarcely aware of the existence of the other. The one line concerns itself with merely material productiveness, with profit and loss that is reckoned in dollars and cents; the other reaches beyond the purely material order of things and yields returns which dollars and cents have no power to purchase. We shall follow up both of these lines, not merely in a speculative way, but with a view to practical results.

What manner of business that is which reckons its profits and loss in dollars and cents, I need, for obvious reasons, not stop to explain in detail; there is much more need of presenting a clear explanation of the other, since that is not rarely looked upon as a side issue and in consequence is understood only in a vague sort of a way. And what is this business? It is the one thing which the all-wise Creator considered of sufficient importance to make it the very end and object of our existence; the

one thing that is fraught with such tremendous consequences for each single individual that in comparison with it the most vital interests of whole nations dwindle into the merest insignificance:—it is the salvation of our immortal souls. It is the consistent working out of life's purposes in accord with the Creator's beneficent intentions; the gathering together of a capital that will bear interest for all eternity; the laying up of a treasure which rust shall not eat and moth shall not consume. It is the one real business of our lives, and by the manner in which we conduct this business we shall stand or fall, we shall be crowned with the most splendid success or be condemned to the most dismal failure.

Have you ever looked upon this work as a business proposition? Do you look upon it as such now, when your attention is called to its existence? If not, where is the business instinct that guides you so unfailingly in all your other undertakings? For it is business indeed! By business we understand any transaction that will increase our assets if brought to a successful issue; any occupation that is expected to be remunerative in its final results; any undertaking that adds to the motive of duty the stronger incentive of gain. And does not the salvation of our immortal souls imply all this? Shall we not be so much the richer if our mortal deeds entitle us at life's solemn close to eternal blessed-

ness? Is it not a profitable occupation that results in the possession of God's own kingdom of unending joy? Is it not a most inspiring undertaking that gives us the certain hope of a glory which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which the heart of man has not even power to conceive? Surely, if it be business, and good business, to make an investment of dollars and cents which will yield returns in an earthly fortune, it must be business, and better business too, to invest one's powers and energies in an undertaking that promises a fortune which shall never fail.

Perhaps you are somewhat shocked at the idea of making the work of salvation a cold business proposition. If you will, there seems to be a touch of commercialism about it; but then it appears very practical, and we are practical men and women. Besides the idea is not my own; it is as old as the world, and it has moreover the express sanction of the divine Founder of our holy religion. When our Blessed Saviour tells us in the Parable of the Talents that a certain king, when about to enter upon a long journey, called his servants and gave to one five talents, to another two, and to a third one, He puts before us the identical business proposition, but in His own unique and sublimely simple way. Nay more: He does not fail to draw out the idea to its last consequences. He calls attention to

the business instinct of two of the servants, who made a profitable investment, and for their conscientious efforts received upon the return of the king a most munificent reward; and then to emphasize the necessity of trading until the Lord cometh, He points out the lack of energy of the third servant, who hid his talent in a napkin, and who in consequence of his failure to show profits was bound hand and foot and cast into exterior darkness. Hence if I put the work of salvation before you as a business proposition, I do so because Christ made it such, and Christ of all others knows best what appeals to the human heart and is most conducive to His Father's interests.

However, whilst the work of salvation is thus truly a business proposition, it does not for this reason brand those engaged therein with the stigma of commercialism. It is true, the hope of gain necessarily enters it and acts as a most powerful motive towards right living; but this motive is not exclusive of others which appeal to all that is noblest in human nature. Surely, one would not be justified in charging you with commercialism simply because you are working for an honest living. You are under obligation to do so, and the thought of dear ones at home, who depend on your efforts, has power to change your daily drudgery into a labor of love. So it is in the business of sal-

vation. When we strive to make our actions meritorious of heaven because heaven means to us the satisfying of all our reasonable desires, we are simply discharging a duty which we owe to our Creator and Redeemer. God Himself implanted these desires in our hearts, and therefore our efforts to satisfy them are in themselves but the accomplishment of God's will. Again, the happiness of heaven, for which we long and labor, redounds at the same time to God's greater glory, and in consequence every effort we make to attain it must necessarily tend to fill up that measure of divine glory which constitutes the ultimate reason why God called us into existence. The work of our salvation is business indeed, but a business after God's own heart.

CAPITAL

"What exchange shall a man give for his soul?" MATTH. XVI, 26.

The importance of a business venture depends mainly on three points. The first of these is the amount of capital to be invested, the second involves the rate of expected profits, and the third consists in the risk of possible failure. If the capital to be invested is only a small fraction of his total possessions, the ordinary business man is not likely to attach much importance to the transaction, even though the rate of profits be quite considerable. If the capital required for the investment is large but the rate of profits low, he may indeed give the matter considerable thought but in all likelihood he will not make the investment, especially if the risk of failure be disproportionately great. If, however, the investment calls for his entire fortune and the expected profits be enormous, whilst the risk depends entirely on his own care and energy, the matter assumes at once such an interest for every true business man, that he would consider it the height of folly not to give it his most careful and undivided attention. It is to him an undertaking of the

highest importance, because his whole fortune is involved, the profits are large, and the successful issue depends altogether on his own personal efforts. It is a business proposition of the first order, and to neglect it would be an irreparable blunder.

Now the business of salvation is precisely such a proposition. Its successful issue is the very purpose of our existence. Everything we have, or can ever hope to have, is involved in this one venture. The possible returns are so enormously great that in comparison with them everything else dwindles into insignificance. Its success or failure is placed in our own hands. If we give it the attention which its importance deserves, success is certain; if we neglect it to any considerable extent, dismal failure will most likely be the result. This, therefore, must perforce commend itself to the serious consideration of every sensible man and woman, who makes the least pretense to a practical business instinct.

First, then, everything we have, or can ever hope to have, is involved in this one venture. How so? Because salvation means the eternal well-being of our immortal soul, and that necessarily comprises all. It is because of our immortal soul that we are reasonable beings and capable of conscious happiness. Without that soul we should be no more than the dumb animal, that eats and drinks and capers about for a while and then rots away into

its component elements. We might, of course, in a dazed sort of a way enjoy the good things of this world; we might feed with as much pleasure upon the choicest viands as do the swine upon their husks: but we should not be able to rise even one degree above their brutish indulgence. No love of kindred would ever stir our bosom, no joy of friendship would move our hearts; we would indeed be drawn to those of our own kind, but only by reason of a merely material attraction, wholly devoid of that conscious enjoyment which is human friendship's own reward. Without our immortal soul, no matter what life principle might take its place, we should of necessity be part and parcel of a merely brute creation, however fair might be our bodies.

However fair might be our bodies? Why, they would not be fair. Our bodies are what they are only by reason of the spiritual soul that dwells within. Without that soul all beauty of feature and grace of form would vanish as if touched by the hand of death. There is exquisite beauty in the human countenance as it teems with the freshness of youth and is tinged with the roses of health; there is ravishing beauty in the human eye as it kindles with the light of intelligence or flashes forth the fire of love: but why? Because that fair countenance is but a veil which hides and yet reveals the beauties of an immortal spirit, and those eyes are in

very truth the windows of the soul, whence flashes forth the created image of the Godhead. Take away that soul, remove that spirit; replace it by the life principle of even the fairest species of the animal world, and what does the body forthwith become? Precisely what the animal was whose life principle is made to actuate its various members: — a clod of earth for a time enabled to vegetate and receive sense impressions, but utterly devoid of that intangible charm which only an immortal spirit can give. If the human body is beautiful and fair, it is such only because there is hidden within its material elements a spiritual soul, which in its being and its actions shadows forth the beauty of God.

So too, is there great beauty in the human voice; a gentle sweetness in the ripple of a merry laugh, a touching sympathy in the sigh of patient sorrow; there is a world of beauty in human thought as it wells forth in song or story, or flashes to and fro in friendly conversation: but again why? Because there dwells within that material body a spiritual soul, the reflex of the Creator's love and wisdom, which echoes after its own created fashion stray chords of music that were born of God. Take away that soul, and though you were to replace it by the life principle of lark or nightingale or of all the sweetest songsters in field and forest, yet would you not have a tithe of the simplest strain of melody

that vibrates in the human voice. For that melody is the outward manifestation of the spirit of beauty which claims kinship with the spirit of the all-beautiful God. In all we are, therefore, and in all we do, it is the immortal soul whence comes our real worth and value.

Nay, without the soul that makes us what we are, even the material world would not be what it is today. It would have remained forever such as nature made it. Birds build their nests and foxes dig their dens, and every living creature is led by a natural instinct to provide itself with some place of shelter for its nightly rest and for the rearing of its young; but it is man alone who can build a home and make of earth a vestibule of heaven. Beast and bird and tiniest insect have each their own instinctive way of foraging for nature's gifts; but it is man alone who can cause nature to yield the gifts which he most desires for his many needs and for life's varied pleasures. To him nature's works are only the raw material which he transforms into things of usefulness and of surpassing beauty. The forest's jungles and the prairie's vast expanse he changes into fruitful fields, whence in summer seasons he garners in his crops and thus provides sweet comfort against the stress of winter. He lays out his gardens, builds his house, gathers around him others of his kind, and calls this abode of comfort

and of blessedness by the sacred name of home. Whence this providence, this loving care? Whence this inward craving for things of beauty and the comforts of a home? Whence can it come but from the immortal spirit, which was destined by the Creator's love and wisdom for that home of beauty which shall be ours in the eternal realms of bliss?

Whatever, therefore, is of any worth in us or of value in our works is but the offspring of the soul within, which itself can only be the image of the Godhead. And mark the necessary inference, which must be plainer than the light of day to any man of sense. If the soul alone has real worth, if on its well-being all else must needs depend, then the soul's salvation is of greater consequence than aught besides that can ever engross the mind of man. Then to the business man and business woman, who of all others are ever looking for the most profitable investment of their time and labor, nothing whatever can put forth so strong an appeal as the business of salvation. It is this that gives point to our Blessed Saviour's solemn question: "What exchange shall a man give for his soul?" There is absolutely nothing in this wide world that can countervail the value of a soul, nothing that can in the least compensate for its eternal loss. Gather together all that is most precious on land and in the sea; gather all the gold and silver and precious

stones; heap them all up into one vast mountain, and add thereto life's sweetest joys, worldly fame and social prestige, and yet will you not have the value of one immortal soul. What is the value of your soul? How important is the work of its salvation? Turn your eyes to Calvary, there upon the cross you will find written in the blood of the God-Man what your soul is worth; there you will find written in that same blood what efforts and what sacrifices should be made to secure its eternal salvation. What exchange shall a man give for his soul? The blood of God's own Son; besides that nothing can equal it in value.

RATE OF PROFITS

"An hundred times as much, now in this time." MARK X, 30.

The second point that lends importance to any business venture is the rate of profits, which may be expected to accrue from the investment. In proportion as this is higher or lower does the undertaking in question commend itself more or less strongly to the business man. For it is this that will count in the final result. Again the importance arising from the rate of profits becomes all the more compelling as the capital to be invested is greater; because then the final result or net profit will be great in proportion.

Hence, as the business of salvation is important beyond measure as far as the invested capital is concerned, for that is none other than our immortal souls dowered with sanctifying grace, we must next consider the rate of profits that may reasonably be expected to accrue therefrom. These profits are of two kinds: the one temporal in its nature, the other eternal. The temporal profits are partly material and partly spiritual, whilst the eternal profits are indeed entirely spiritual, yet in such a way that they

eminently include all that is good and desirable in material blessings. Let us take a look at both of them, so that we may clearly understand what inducements they hold out to us in this most important affair.

In order to realize fully the temporal profits arising from the work of salvation, we must bear in mind that this work is preëminently in accord with the dictate of right reason and with the known will of God. Reason makes it quite clear, even to the dullest of us, that whatever we do to promote our soul's interests is by that very fact highly honorable and deserving of esteem. Hence there results immediately a two-fold blessing, the approval of our own conscience and the respect of our fellow men. The approval of our own conscience gives us peace of soul and joy of spirit, and this is a blessing that no money can buy, a blessing that can absolutely not be obtained in any other way, and at the same time a blessing without which life is not worth the living. What interest and enjoyment can life possibly hold out to one who must ever be afraid of giving his conscience the slightest chance to place the naked truth before his eyes? to one who is haunted day and night by the ghost of his murdered soul which will not down? Yet unless a man makes of himself a veritable brute, which is dead to all sense of shame and does not look beyond the husks upon which it

feeds, he will not succeed for any considerable length of time in escaping the avenging torture of his outraged conscience, if he be fool enough to neglect the business of salvation. For say what we will, we all know and cannot help believing that our first duty is to look to the salvation of our souls, as we all know and cannot help believing that God's holy will has made this the very purpose of our existence. Fulfillment of this duty means contentment, peace, happiness; neglect of it spells discontent, unrest, disgust.

Nor does the world, although so partial to its votaries, dare withhold its approval from those who pay due attention to the interests of their soul. No one is ever so highly respected, even by those who live only for worldly gain, as the man who has sufficient strength of purpose and nobility of character to rise above the merely material conditions of life and to draw his inspirations from the great hereafter. People recognize instinctively that such a man's life stands for solid worth and that his character is beyond challenge. They may not admire him for worldly wisdom, which knows how to carve a fortune out of the neighbor's needs; but they worship in him that higher wisdom which does not hesitate to cast a fortune to the winds, if its possession cannot be squared with the principles of moral rectitude. He is every inch a man; because he is true

to his conscience and true to his God, and in consequence most helpful to his fellow men. He may be rich as Dives or poor as Lazarus, that matters little; for his real worth is independent of these accidental trappings. He is, therefore, what no worshiper of Mammon can ever hope to be, honored of men and beloved of God.

And what in this respect is true of man is doubly true of woman. Man's attention to his soul's salvation is productive of respect in others; woman's attention to the same calls forth universal veneration. Somehow women are supposed to have clearer views and firmer purposes along the lines of religious obligation than their somewhat obtuse and careless brothers, and when they measure up to this expectation in their greater loyalty to God and conscience, their natural attractiveness receives thereby a consecration that adds to it a touch of the divine. It is this that keeps the memory of our good mothers so fresh in our hearts even till life's latest day. How sacred is not to every one of us the recollection of those blessed years, when mother folded our infant hands and taught us the secret charm of prayer. How we love to dwell in thought on the sacredness of her affection, as with gentle hands she made each night the sign of the redemption on our forehead and then bade us sweetly rest in the arms of Mother Mary. Sweet to us is the memory of

her unfailing kindness, touching the recollection of her many sacrifices; but the sweetness of the one and the tenderness of the other receive their greatest charm from the undying remembrance of her saintly life. She may have been the most beautiful of women, she may have been gowned in the finest of fabrics and adorned with the most precious of jewels; yet it is not this that lives on in our thoughts and affections; it is not this that accompanies us as a guardian angel through the stress and strain of life's many trials: — no not this, but her perfect Christian character, so gentle, sweet and patient, that the mere thought of it makes us yearn for the home whither she has gone before us. This alone has lasting value; all the rest are but empty baubles.

Proper attention, therefore, to the work of salvation brings its own reward even in this world of sorrow and disappointment. Peace of conscience and a good name among men go far to recompense us for all the efforts and sacrifices which this work necessarily demands. This present life has its trials for all of us, whether we spend it in the service of God or of Mammon; but there is this important difference, that the trials endured in the service of God are a source of strength and contentment, whereas those undergone in the service of Mammon bring weakness in their train and dissatis-

faction. So too has this life its joys and its pleasures, but whilst for the servants of God they are the harbingers of far greater enjoyment to follow, for the servants of Mammon they are ever embittered by the certain prospect of coming sorrows. There may indeed be exceptions to this, but these exceptions only confirm the rule. In this respect virtue is its own reward and vice its own punishment, and beyond this there is another reward and another punishment from which even the exceptions are eliminated.

Nor are peace of conscience and a good name among men the only temporal benefits that come to us from a serious attention to the work of salvation. Being honored of men, we shall also be beloved of God, and God's love will show itself in many a blessing that gives us a foretaste of the great reward to come. These blessings may not always take the form of worldly success, but blessings they surely are no matter under what guise they may appear. To us it not rarely appears that in this world it is the wicked who prosper and the virtuous who must drain sorrow's bitter chalice; yet were we to look at this matter through the eyes of God, we would most likely correct our judgment in some very essential points. Prosperity is a relative term and its real significance cannot be gathered from the size of one's bank account. "Unless the Lord

build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it." A mite with God's blessing is better than a mickle without it, and the just man's porridge is more savory than the venison of the sinner. It was this blessing that our Blessed Lord had in mind when in answer to Peter's question He said: "Amen I say to you, there is no man who hath left house or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who shall not receive an hundred times as much, now in this time; houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions." That is, if any man will serve God faithfully even to the sacrificing of what is near and dear to him, the same shall receive of God in this life blessings that are worth to him a hundred times as much as all that he has sacrificed for the sake of his religion. It is in this hundredfold that we must look for true prosperity, all else is but vanity and affliction of spirit.

NET GAIN

"In the world to come life everlasting." MARK x, 30.

The temporal profits arising from the work of salvation are made up of peace of conscience, a good name among men, and God's special blessing. These profits are sometimes thought very lightly of, and yet of all temporal gains they are by far the most important. Where peace of conscience is wanting, there even the sweetest pleasures taste of gall; where one's good name is forfeited, there all the wealth of Crœsus can give no genius satisfaction; where the blessing of God is withheld, there every human effort must needs prove unavailing. Even from a temporal point of view, therefore, the business of salvation proves highly remunerative. In one way or another it always exemplifies the truth of our Blessed Saviour's words: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." Whatever may be needed for life and life's comforts shall be thrown into the bargain.

If this be true, as it most certainly is, we would naturally expect the sum total of eternal gain to be something far beyond the power of man to con-

ceive. For, after all, the work of salvation is essentially a work for eternity; a work the real and substantial remuneration of which shall be received only in the world beyond the grave. Life is but a trading time, the accounting will come after death. God in His goodness may give us even here on earth a reward exceeding great, but that is only an earnest of what shall be ours in the great beyond. What this final reward will be, we shall never be able to realize as long as the veil of our mortal flesh still covers the eyes of our immortal spirit; yet we may form thereof a certain fancy picture, which, fancy though it be, must for all that fall immeasurably short of the glorious reality. If it were granted to us, as it was granted to St. Paul, to be shown in spirit what manner of joys there are in heaven, there would be no further need of urging us on to work for our soul's salvation; for the mere recollection of joys so great would ever after carry us triumphantly over all possible obstacles to the very height of human perfection. Even the veriest cowards among us would by that one glimpse be changed into heroes.

However, as that glimpse is not likely to be vouchsafed us, we may as well do the next best thing by trying to gather some concept of that glorious abode from what our Blessed Saviour and His Apostles have told us concerning it. For it is all

important that the idea of heaven be ever vividly before our minds, as without that our aspirations are constantly tending earthward. It is a peculiarity of our nature that it changes its moral complexion with the thoughts that occupy our mind. If these thoughts are of things eternal, our hearts rise above mere temporal concerns and seek their rest in the bosom of God; whereas if these same thoughts are confined to the things of sense, our whole being clings to the purely material conditions of life and forthwith becomes of the earth earthy. Hence if we would only allow our thoughts to dwell on the joys of heaven, they would insensibly so influence our lives that our entrance into that blessed abode would only be a question of time.

Now if we glean from Holy Scripture whatever information is contained therein concerning heaven, we find that the happiness of the Blessed, and therefore our future reward, is twofold; namely, freedom from evil and the possession of all good. Suppose you apply that simple statement to yourselves individually, what would that mean? First, freedom from evil. Think of all the evil that you have known in your lives, short or long as they may have been: — the evil of physical sufferings, the evil of mental anguish; of poverty and of sickness, of temptation and of sin, of disappointment and of never dying remorse. Think of the evils which the

future will bring: — the loss of friends and of kindred, the passing of youth, the decrepitude of old age, and the agony of death. Then fancy that there flashes suddenly upon your mind the clear consciousness and the firm conviction that all this has passed away never more to return; that life is yours and will be yours forever with all its pleasures, all its comforts, all its blessings, and not so much as a shadow of evil will ever again flit across the brightness of its joys. What a sweet feeling of relief, what a deep sense of security will all at once be yours!

How overwhelming, for instance, is the feeling of security that thrills the heart of the shipwrecked mariner, when after ceaseless battling with the waves he is cast upon the shore and feels that he is at last safe from the haunting terrors of the deep! How great the joy of the soldier, when after many a hard-fought battle he once more tastes the comforts of peace! How rapturous the delight of the homesick wanderer, when after long years of exile in foreign lands he returns again to the home of his childhood! And all this joy, all this rapture, all this sweet security will be ours at our entrance into heaven. Past are all the sufferings and trials of life; past are temptation and sin: — an eternity of peace, an eternity of rest is all our own.

Again, think of all the joys that you have known in your lives: — the joy of perfect health and of physical comfort; the joy of satisfied desires and of achieved success; the joy of pleasant associations and of genuine friendship, and the greater joy that springs from the blessing of a happy home. Recall the joys of your childhood days, the joys of your youth or maidenhood, the joys of maturer years: — gather all these joys of many years into one single instant of time, and pour them all and all at once into your hearts hungering for happiness, and then try to realize what would be the rapture of your souls! It would be a happiness so unspeakably great that no human heart could bear it even for a passing moment. Yet all this will be ours the moment we cross the threshold of our heavenly home. It shall be a happiness full and complete, not of the soul alone but also of the body, when after the glorious resurrection it shall be reunited to the companion of its mortal life. All that delights the eye, charms the ear, and captivates the heart,— all this shall be ours to enjoy forever. Not a single faculty of the soul, not a single sense of the body, but it shall thrill with a pleasure the most exquisite and everlasting.

Think of the wonderful transformation that shall be wrought in your bodies when they rise in glory

from the tomb. Perfect in feature and form, and blessed with never-fading youth, they shall be like the glorified body of our Blessed Redeemer, so surpassingly beautiful that the mere sight of them alone would hold your senses spellbound for all eternity. When Christ appeared in His glorified body on Mt. Tabor, the three Apostles who were with Him were beside themselves with joy and admiration. "Lord, it is good for us to be here," was all they could say at sight of such entrancing beauty. They desired nothing more than to gaze forever upon that world of glory. And such, in due proportion to our merit, shall our bodies be after their glorious resurrection. "One is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars. For star differeth from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it shall rise in glory. It is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power."

Add to this the unspeakable joy that will result from your association with the best and noblest men and women that ever lived. All your friends, all your brothers and sisters in the house of God your Father. Think of your meeting with father and mother, with brother and sister, and with all those

who were linked to you in the bonds of love here on earth. All supremely happy, all a source of joy to you and unending bliss.

And yet this is not heaven. This is merely a ripple on the ocean of happiness which constitutes the bliss of life eternal. The real, substantial, all-surpassing happiness of heaven consists in the vision of God, in the possession of God as our very own. It is the happiness of God Himself poured into our hearts and souls and overflowing thence into every sense of our glorified bodies. What this may be, I dare not attempt to describe. Even the most glowing description, however extravagant it might seem to us, would be merely a caricature of the awe-inspiring reality. To this we can only apply the words of St. Paul: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him." This is God's own secret, the secret of His infinite love.

NEGLECT OF BUSINESS

"I went and hid thy talent in the earth." MATTH. XXV, 25.

The chief source of a business man's reputation is his painstaking care in all he does and his absolute fidelity to his business obligations. His natural capacity for business transactions may not be extraordinary, but for this he can to a large extent make up by his persevering efforts to succeed, and if he does, his standing in the business world will be all the more solidly assured. On the other hand, no matter what his cleverness may be, no matter how infallible his business instinct, if he be remiss in his attention to duty or if he have recourse to questionable methods, his business reputation sinks at once below par and even among his own associates he is accounted either as a fool or a knave. He may by hook or by crook accumulate a vast fortune; he may be tolerated in a society which itself has grown fat by feeding upon the purloined substance of the poor: but his dishonest wealth will never be to him a source of genuine satisfaction, and his apparent social success is only a farce that hides for a time the awful tragedy of failure.

What is thus quite a common occurrence in the ordinary business world, finds its counterpart in the business of salvation. There, too, painstaking care and fidelity to duty bring their own reward, whilst neglect and dishonesty are their own Nemesis whose vengeance cannot be eluded. Of the rewards which accrue from the faithful attendance to the work of salvation enough has been said in two preceding discourses. They constitute a rate of profits that is simply enormous, not only as regards the world to come but also in reference to this present life. It is now in order, therefore, to point out the terrible losses which must necessarily result from the neglect of that same work. And these losses, like the profits, are again of two kinds: the one temporal, the other eternal.

The temporal losses are the exact reverse of the temporal profits and correspond to them in almost every particular. As attention to the work of salvation has the approval of conscience and is therefore rewarded by peace of mind and joy of heart, so does neglect of the same work incur the condemnation of conscience and as a result finds its proper punishment in mental uneasiness and depression of spirit. It is true, conscience may be killed and its voice may be silenced by the turmoil of worldly distractions; but somehow its ghost will keep on haunting the innermost recesses of the soul

and the echo of its dying groan will forever fling a note of discord into life's most ravishing music. There is no need of bloody tragedies to conjure up weird visions of spectre forms; the silent passing away of a soul, done to death by the slow process of spiritual starvation, holds not rarely greater horrors in store for its base and cowardly murderer than ever forced parricide to the confession of guilt that brought him to the gallows. Years of apparent happiness may pass by; for a long time all may seem peace and contentment; the light of joy may flash from kindling eyes, and many a rippling laugh may wreathe the face with merriment: yet sooner or later the light will be extinguished and the ripple will pass away, and then the ghost of the murdered soul within will stare out upon the world through haunted eyes and careworn features, writing there the story of life's awful tragedy in characters so large and clear that he who runs may read.

Nor is this all. Where due attention to the soul's interests is wanting, there is necessarily an undue craving for the things of sense. Man is half angel and half beast. In proportion as the one is starved out of existence, the other tends to predominance in its own sphere of activity. Hence the person who neglects his soul's salvation is in a fair way of becoming to all intents and purposes merely a brute in

human form. He subjects himself to a materializing process that effectually eliminates from his being all that is distinctly human. He becomes material in his thoughts, material in his tastes, material in his way of living. He is a creature of sense interests and usually sinks down to mere sense enjoyment. Or if he be of an intellectual cast of mind, he may indeed move in the higher spheres of thought, but even there the clay of his earthly composition will leave its sticky mark. Of the earth earthy, he feels at home only in his native element of mud.

And this process of inevitable degeneration becomes all the more pitiful if the subject of it happens to be a woman. By nature of a finer grain than man, she has in her delicate composition possibilities for good and for evil that pass all human calculation. If she is faithful to her God-given instinct of cultivating the spiritual tendencies of her soul, she makes herself what she was meant to be, society's guardian angel; but if she proves recreant to her high vocation and seeks her heaven in the things of earth, she is apt to join those other angels known in vulgar parlance as incarnate devils. A man who disregards the interests of his soul may turn God's fair earth into reeking shambles; a woman who is unmindful of her soul's salvation is in a fair way to make of earth a blazing hell.

But even if matters do not reach this extreme phase, such men and women usually make a most miserable failure of their lives in respect to all that is really worth the having. As they find no consolation in their empty hearts within, they are constantly looking for amusement to the world without. And in this they must ever meet their greatest disappointment. Amusements like candies and sugared fruits are good when taken at long intervals and with due moderation, but when one tries to live on them, their very sweetness is soon turned gall. In this respect the heart is very much like the stomach, both need substantial nourishment in order to perform well their own proper functions. If that nourishment is not supplied in due time, the final result is starvation, bodily in the one case and spiritual in the other.

And what does the world think of these spiritual derelicts, who drift onwards in their aimless course whithersoever the current of their animal instincts may carry them? It usually takes them at their own practical valuation. As they live only for the things of time, it is only the things of time that give them value in the eyes of others. If they chance to occupy a high station in life, are possessed of great wealth or endowed with some attractive quality of mind or body, they may float for a time upon these empty baubles into popular

favor; but the moment these same baubles burst, as sooner or later they will, they sink to the very depths of contemptuous oblivion. If they are of the common kind; men and women who eat their bread in the sweat of their brow; they are rated high or low according to their brawn or manual dexterity. As they themselves set no value on their immortal souls, these souls are of necessity left out of count in the world's appraisement. They are taken for what they are by the logic of their deeds, — beasts of burden harnessed to the triumphal car of Mammon's darlings. If they prove refractory in their masters' service, if sickness or advancing years depreciate their market value, they are simply pushed aside to make room for others whose productive capacity promises a greater profit.

You may tell me that this view of the matter is not borne out by the facts. In actual life it is usually the men and women who think least of their eternal salvation that are most successful. In business everything they touch turns forthwith to gold, and in social life they achieve triumphs which none can rival. Why, even in their domestic ventures they seem most happy. They dwell in magnificent mansions, have a whole army of servants at their beck, and everything seems to go merry as a marriage bell. Yes, so it seems, but then things are not always what they seem. There is as much mis-

ery in the palaces of the rich as in the hovels of the poor, and more aching hearts beat under silks and satins than under the rough garments made of homespun. In many instances indeed the worldly minded may for a time enjoy greater outward prosperity than their more virtuous neighbors, because God in His goodness frequently bestows temporal blessings where He foresees that some day His eternal curse must fall; but this apparent prosperity is only a mask that conceals for a while life's inevitable and most dismal failure. God may allow these men and women to prosper for a time, as the world judges of prosperity; He may suffer them to build their barns and garner in their crops and say to their soul: "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest; eat, drink, make good cheer," but meanwhile He utters against them that terrible sentence: "Thou fool, this night they require thy soul of thee: and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

FAILURE

"The wages of sin is death." Rom. vi, 23.

The man who neglects his business persistently, and yet is not a downright fool, must, sooner or later, become convinced of the inevitable fact that he will end in failure. If, on realizing this, he has sense enough to throw himself heart and soul into the task of repairing the damages caused by his neglect, it may still be possible to avert the impending crash, but if he recklessly continues on his downward course, he will in due time become the victim of his own folly. He is courting ruin, and he will find it.

Precisely the same conditions obtain in the business of salvation. Even temporary neglect inflicts losses that are more or less severe, according to circumstances; but when that neglect becomes habitual it will lead to failure, and this failure means hell. It is a failure that admits of no rehabilitation; it is complete and final. It is a failure so gigantic in its magnitude and so terrible in its utter hopelessness that only the omniscient God can fully comprehend its awful significance. It is the sum total of all evil, even as salvation is the sum total

of all good. To it can be applied, but in a contrary sense, the words of St. Paul: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man."

Do you believe there is a hell? It has become the fashion of the day to regard hell as a bugaboo; as something that is very useful to frighten naughty boys with when they won't go to Sunday School. Men and women who pride themselves on being abreast of the times boast that they have long since outgrown their quondam faith in fire and brimstone. The age is too refined to conceive of such drastic measures in the final adjustment of violated justice. It wouldn't be nice, you know, to hand over fair ladies and dashing gentlemen to those ugly and ill-mannered imps of the bottomless pit. Why, it is bad manners even to speak of hell; or, if you really must speak of it, please do call it Hades. That has a classic ring to it, and does not spoil our appetite. Hell? No, a hell there must not be, for, if there were, life itself would become hell. Why, if there were a hell, one would have to turn either fool or saint. For to live as you list and then take hell as a consequence, would be the height of folly, whilst to live as you ought, so as to escape that place of horrors, would make you a saint. Well, we can't be saints and we won't be fools, and, therefore, hell must go.

Thus reasons the world, and thus you may reason, but if you do, you must first cease to be Christians. You must be prepared to deny that Christ is God before you can even attempt to deny that there is a hell. For He assures us in most explicit and definite terms that His own curse shall fall upon the wicked and that they shall be cast into "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." It is a notable fact that Christ, although ever so gentle, so forgiving, so moderate in all His views, is nevertheless most insistent and most emphatic whenever he finds occasion to touch upon the punishment of hell. And what is more, He even seems to have sought the occasion to set forth this terrible doctrine. As St. John, the Evangelist, tells us, the Gospels contain only a small fraction of what Christ did and taught, and yet in these same gospels He speaks of hell in as many as twenty-seven different places, and always in the most emphatic terms. He has no delicacy in telling people openly that hell will be their everlasting portion unless here on earth they do the will of His Father who is in heaven. And what is the meaning of this if hell be a myth, as the modern world will have it? Why, it means that either Christ Himself was deceived on this point or that He deliberately deceived us, and in either case He cannot be God. Hence the inevita-

ble alternative: Either believe that hell really exists or give up your faith in Christ.

Furthermore, Christ not only declares most positively that there is a hell, but He even tells us in detail what manner of place it is and what will be the lot of those who are condemned to its everlasting torments. He calls it a place of exterior darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth; a place where the worm of conscience shall never die and where the fire of torture shall never be extinguished; a place of unquenchable fire, where the damned shall be burned like cockle; where they shall suffer a raging thirst and yet shall not have so much as a drop of water to afford them relief; where the curse of an angry God shall chain them forever to their bed of torture. This is an awful picture to contemplate, and nothing short of God's own infallible word could move anyone to believe it in its objective reality. Reason does, indeed, call for a place of punishment in the world to come; nay, reason points even to the possibility of an everlasting punishment for those who have misspent their lives and died unrepentant; but reason alone could not make of it a place of such unspeakable horrors. Yet Christ has no hesitation at all about the matter. He paints hell in the most lurid colors and declares that He Himself will con-

demn evil-doers to these never ending tortures on the great day of reckoning. "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels," will be His final sentence of their eternal condemnation, as He expressly states in His description of the last Judgment.

Again, to escape that awful fate, he bids us sacrifice all, even life and limb and whatever else is most dear to the human heart. "If thy hand scandalize thee," he says, "cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into hell; into unquenchable fire. And if thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter lame into life everlasting than having two feet, to be cast into the hell of unquenchable fire. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee with one eye to enter into the Kingdom of God than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire; where their worm dieth not and the fire is not extinguished. Fear not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him that can destroy both body and soul into hell." And yet men dare call Christ their God and say there is no hell! They dare look up to Christ as the most perfect of human beings and say it is bad manners to speak of hell! Oh, the inconsistency of human folly!

And if there be a hell, as there most assuredly

is, for what sort of persons did God kindle its unquenchable fire? For the murderer, the robber, the libertine? Ah, yes, for them, too; but not only for them. Many a respectable gentleman and estimable lady, as the world judges them, will swell the ranks of society's outcasts in that region of eternal horrors. Do not deceive yourselves. The way to hell does not lead through the prison cell alone and across the ghastly scaffold; it passes through pleasant homes and skirts the very sanctuary of God. Regarding this, our Blessed Saviour does not leave us in the slightest doubt. The unfaithful servant, who was bound hand and foot and cast into exterior darkness, had no great crimes laid to his charge; he had simply neglected to use the talent which was given him for trade. And even of Dives, Christ had nothing worse to say than that he was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day; yet, when he died, he was buried in hell. It is crime enough for any man or woman to starve their soul to death by neglecting the work of salvation. That salvation is their God-appointed work, it is the business of their lives, and if they neglect it, they are by that very fact unfaithful servants, who on the great day of reckoning shall be cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is a terrible doctrine to put before the men and women of the twentieth century, who, by the logic of their deeds, are all too often disciples of Dives in life and by the same inexorable logic must look forward to be sharers in his awful fate after death. Yes, it is a terrible doctrine, but it is the doctrine of Christ, and Christ is God. One of the greatest curses of the religious world to-day is precisely this, that ministers of the word haven't the courage to preach this terrible doctrine to the congregations committed to their charge. They expatiate on the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, and never so much as hint at God's inexorable justice and its awful retribution upon all doers of iniquity. They eliminate hell from the teaching of Christ, and as a result they force Christ to show His justice where He would gladly have manifested His mercy. Did our pulpits more frequently ring with the doctrine of hell after death, there would be less of hell here on earth, and many a one would be successfully striving to secure a bright home in heaven who is now preparing for himself a bed of torture in hell. God is indeed the most loving of fathers, who wills not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live; but for all that He does not cease to be God, Who will render unto all according to their works. If He so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son,

He likewise so hates sin as to kindle hell's unquenchable fire. For the one as for the other, we have Christ's own word, and Christ's word shall not pass away.

TAKING COUNSEL

"The prudent man doth all things with counsel." PROV. XIII, 16.

Very few business men have such unlimited confidence in their own judgment as to enter upon an important venture without taking counsel with some trusted adviser, whose knowledge of the business in hand and whose interest in their success they have learned to value. Hence most large concerns pay out vast sums of money for the purpose of having always at their service a number of men whom they can consult in any matter of moment. They have learned by experience, and sometimes by very bitter experience too, that there is truth in the old saw according to which two heads know more than one. This very readiness of taking counsel shows their business instinct.

Now, the business of salvation seems to be of all others the most important. At least so it appears to us when we consider it in the light of reason as directed along the lines of faith. But perhaps our individual reason is somewhere at fault in deducing this particular conclusion. It is not impossible to conceive that there may be a flaw in our reasoning

which somehow escaped our notice. Hence it is proper that we also should take counsel; and this is all the more proper as any lingering doubt in reference to the importance of the matter in hand must necessarily be paralyzing in its effects upon the energies of our souls. Most people are careless about their salvation because they lack the practical conviction that it should take precedence of temporal interest at all costs. This is the only possible explanation of their worldly and unreligious lives; for if they had this conviction and were still to act as they do, they would by that very fact be fit subjects for the lunatic asylum. Let us take counsel, therefore, with the most reliable authority that can be found, with one whose knowledge is unlimited and whose interest in our success cannot be doubted. Such a one is our Blessed Saviour Himself.

Has it ever struck you how terribly one-sided our Saviour's life and teaching appear, as we find them recorded in the Gospel narrative? Things of merely temporal import He seems to have eliminated entirely from His scheme of world reformation. He simply brushed them aside as if He considered them of no consequence. He had the arranging of His mode of life in His own hands, yet not a thought was ever given to the good things of this world except to emphasize His utter indifference in their regard. He was of royal descent,

yet He would be born in a stable. He was rightful heir to all the wealth of nations, yet He labored like the meanest serf for His daily sustenance. He might have arrayed Himself in the purple robes of royal splendor, yet He walked about in the garb of a pauper. When His enthusiastic followers wished to take Him by force and make Him king, He fled away from them and hid Himself in the desert. When at the time preordained of God His enemies sought to slay Him, He eagerly went forth to meet them and died the death of a condemned slave. In life and in death and in all the ordering of His ways, He courted sufferings and contempt to such a degree and so effectively, that to Him is literally applicable the prophet's plaintive cry: "I am a worm and no man."

Nay more: this utter indifference to worldly distinction and sense comfort, which He so strikingly exemplified in His own life, He likewise demanded of all His followers in so far as might be consistent with the circumstances of their lives. He pronounced a blessing upon the poor in spirit and upon all those who suffer for justice' sake; whilst at the same time He uttered a four-fold woe against such as cling to riches and feed upon the praise of men. He set Himself up as a model for the imitation of all, and whoso does not conform himself to that model is not worthy of Him. "I have given you

an example in all things," He says, "that as I have done, so do you likewise." "If any man will come after me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me." Truly, in Him and in His followers there is little room for worldly interests. His aspirations and theirs reach out to a higher plane. "The flesh profiteth nothing; it is the spirit that giveth life."

And what is the underlying reason of this one-sidedness? Was Christ narrow-minded? Was His judgment warped and His view of life distorted? That's impossible; because although true man, He was at the same time true God, whose judgments are just and whose wisdom is infinite. Are then the good things of this world an evil that must be shunned, and are the joys of life a curse that must be dreaded? That cannot be; because they are all the work of God, and the works of God are good:— He blessed them all. What then can be the reason of it all? For surely, a reason there must be, as the infinitely wise and loving Christ could not possibly act from mere caprice.

Yes, a reason there is, and the very best of reasons: — it is the value of man's immortal soul and the paramount importance of the business of salvation. In comparison with that all else is of no consequence. "God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him, may not perish, but may have life

5341

everlasting." Christ so highly valued the human soul that He was willing to give His own life for its redemption. He considered the work of salvation so important that He was ready to endure poverty and contempt and boundless sufferings in order to bring it to a successful issue. Christ shivering as a babe in the cold stable at Bethlehem; Christ laboring as a youth in the carpenter shop at Nazareth; Chirst traveling about as a teacher through the length and breadth of the Holy Land; Christ dying as the Redeemer upon the cross on Calvary; Christ standing before His followers as a model of self-renunciation: — Christ in all His thoughts, in all His aspirations, in all His words, in all His deeds, teaches and exemplifies and inculcates this one eternal truth, that the salvation of man's immortal soul outstrips in importance all that can ever occupy the thoughts of God and man in the whole world of human interests. This is the reason of Christ's apparently one-sided life; this the reason of His apparently one-sided teaching. It is the soul's salvation that matters, and in comparison with that all else matters naught.

It was not because Christ had no human interests, for He was the most human of beings that ever lived; it was not because Christ had no human affections, for He loved as no human being ever loved. He understood human nature, He loved

human nature, He yearned to promote the happiness of human nature; but He realized with all the clearness of divine knowledge that man's truest happiness is so inextricably bound up with his soul's salvation, that through the attainment of this alone can its fruition ever become possible. Men may call His doctrine of self-renunciation inhuman; they may term His insistence upon the supernatural blind fanaticism; they may turn Him out of doors as an enemy of the world's progress: — all this moves Him not; He insists and insists again, that it profits a man nothing even if he gain the whole world but lose his immortal soul; that there is nothing whatever in all the world's riches and glory, which man may give in exchange for his soul. To emphasize the truth of this doctrine He the Son of God led a life of labor and privation; to emphasize the truth of this doctrine He the Son of God allowed Himself to be nailed to the cross, and to vindicate the truth of this doctrine He the Son of God will judge all nations and each single individual according to their acceptance or rejection of it as the standard of their lives. What do you think of the importance of the business of salvation? Will you accept the counsel of your Legal Adviser?

It is on this point, more than on any other, that so many men and women of to-day are hopelessly at variance with Christ their Saviour and their

Teacher. They place a high value upon their earthly possessions, a high value upon bodily comforts and worldly honors; but their soul, their immortal soul, they would willingly sell for thirty pieces of silver. For thirty pieces of silver? Why, they sell it for the vile pleasure of a moment, for one sip of the poisoned cup, for one thought of deadly hate, for one act of bloody revenge: — yes, sell it to avenge an enemy's frown or to win a courtesan's smile.

Ask the modern business man what value he places upon his immortal soul, and in perhaps nine cases out of every ten he will say that he never gave the matter a thought. The soul has no market value, it yields no return in dividends, and so it is of no interest to him. That solicitude for his soul's welfare should influence him in the shaping of his conduct he may perhaps admit in theory, but he never reduces it to practice. Ask the gentleman of leisure and the lady of fashion what value they place upon their immortal souls, and if they answer at all it will be with a shrug of the shoulders and a toss of the head to let you know that such considerations are altogether foreign to their world of human interests. All their care is for their bodies, all their solicitude about temporal success; not a thought for their souls, not an action for eternity. And yet: "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

II

MEANS AND METHODS

TRADE CONDITIONS

"The law is good, if a man use it lawfully." I Tim. 1, 8.

In every well-ordered society business transactions must be in conformity with certain laws, which regulate the conditions of trade. In some instances it is requisite to have the right of citizenship, in others to possess a certain reserve capital, in others again to submit account books to state inspection. All of these various regulations serve some useful purpose. They are so many safeguards both to individuals and to society. The business man may find them irksome at times, yet if he desires to do legitimate business he has no choice but to submit and act in accordance with existing laws.

In the matter of salvation God has seen fit to lay down similar conditions. Some of these are so essential that neglect of them makes salvation impossible, whilst others are very useful indeed yet may under given circumstances either be dispensed with or to some extent be modified. Now as we are all convinced that both our temporal and eternal interests demand of us a proper attention to the all

important business of salvation, it would seem next in order to examine somewhat in detail what conditions are to be observed so as to make salvation secure. We shall begin with such as are more essential, and then take the others as the subject matter requires their elucidation.

The first condition which cannot be dispensed with under any combination of circumstances touches our citizenship. Unless we are duly enrolled as citizens we shall not even be allowed to work for any profits whether temporal or eternal. This may seem strange, yet it is a most certain fact, and a fact too that is frequently overlooked even by men and women of serious purpose. Perhaps the strangeness of it will disappear if we consider what this citizenship really implies. It is neither more or less than the state of sanctifying grace, or, if you will, the condition of divine sonship. By nature we are only servants of God, and as such we have no right of our own to be admitted into heaven. Nay, by our unaided natural powers we can do nothing whatever towards the attainment of that eternal happiness which constitutes our soul's salvation. Heaven is a supernatural reward, and to be capable of meriting it we must first be raised to a higher plane of being which accords with the reward that is to be attained. Many there are, who from a merely natural point of view seem to

lead good lives, yet who, it is much to be feared, will on the day of the great assizes appear empty handed before their judge. They are like the foolish virgins of whom our Blessed Saviour speaks, as related in the Gospel; they have lamps indeed but no oil, and so they are not prepared to meet the Bridegroom. It is true, God could have left us in the state of servitude and then recompensed our good deeds with a reward due to faithful servants; but He preferred to make us His own children, who should receive as their reward the inheritance of all His possessions. Hence if we wish to work out our salvation at all, we must do so as the children of God, and God's children we cannot become except through sanctifying grace.

Think for a moment what this implies. On the part of God infinite love; on our part an elevation to almost infinite dignity. Even in the natural order God made us to His own image and likeness. The perfections of His infinite being are reflected in a finite way in our God-given nature. Even as mere creatures we are in a sense the offspring of God; but through sanctifying grace something immeasurably higher is conferred on us, which gives us the right to look up to our God and Creator and call Him Father. For by this, says St. Peter, we are made partakers of the divine nature; by this, says St. John, we are born again of God and are

called,— nay, are in very truth the children of God.

In what precisely sanctifying grace consists, we may leave for the present to the discussion of theologians. For us it is much more important to understand clearly its bearing upon the work of our salvation. This is its practical aspect, the one thing that will count in the final reckoning. That sanctifying grace gives to our souls an unspeakable beauty; that it impresses upon them the lineaments of the Godhead; that in consequence of it God dwells in our souls in a very special manner, so that our bodies even are temples of the Holy Ghost and members of the body of Christ: — all this is indeed very consoling; all this increases in us that personal self-respect, without which we are not likely to comport ourselves as becomes the children of God. Yet over and above all this, and more than all this, do we stand in need of being ever keenly alive to our absolute dependence on its presence in our souls for the successful issue of the great work of our eternal salvation. Unless we feel this need, unless we can touch it, so to speak, with our hands, we are likely to spend many a day to no purpose; many a day which is not gladdened by the sunshine of God's love; many a day which will lay up wrath for the day of wrath, as St. Paul so forcefully expresses it in his Epistle to the Romans.

Now this our absolute dependence on sanctifying grace is beautifully and strikingly set forth by our Blessed Saviour in the Parable of the Vineyard. There He compares the world to a vineyard of which His heavenly Father is the keeper. In that vineyard He Himself represents the vines and His followers are the branches. "As the branch," He says, "cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing." Now, we abide in Christ and Christ abides in us precisely through sanctifying grace; that grace is the bond of union between us and Christ and in consequence between us and God. The moment this bond is broken, we are simply like the branches that have been lopped off the vine,— wholly incapable of producing fruit because not united to the parent stem.

The practical consequences of this doctrine of our Blessed Saviour are evidently most far-reaching. If without union with Christ through sanctifying grace we are radically incapable of performing any salutary action, then the whole time we live devoid of grace is simply lost for eternity. Then no matter what actions we perform whilst in that state, no matter what prayers we say or what sacrifices we make, they cannot give us a title to a

reward in heaven. These prayers and good works are indeed not useless, because with God's help they may obtain for us the grace of conversion, which otherwise might have been withheld altogether; but aside from this they have no value in the eyes of God, although by men they may be accounted as heroic. This is the law of God, and by this all must needs abide.

It is because sanctifying grace is so necessary for the work of salvation that God has made provision to confer it upon each single individual almost simultaneously with the bestowal of physical life. He has placed the parents of every child born into this world under the strictest obligation to secure for it without delay the grace of Baptism, whereby it is born again of water and the Holy Spirit. In that second birth the image of the Godhead, which is engraven upon every human soul at the moment of its creation, receives a new and supernatural perfection, which carries with it all the rights and prerogatives of divine sonship. Thereby the child of man becomes the child of God, the new inhabitant of earth is made a citizen of heaven. Years must yet elapse before the child's reason can awake in conscious thought, but when that moment comes the infant soul is already possessed of the power to make her very first thought meritorious of an eternal reward. Or if meanwhile the young life is

touched by the chill hand of death, the regenerated soul wings her way heavenward, not indeed to receive a reward, but to claim and to secure her rightful inheritance. See how anxious the good God is to save every soul made to His own image and likeness.

In view of this it becomes all the more inexplicable how men and women can be so utterly unconcerned about the possession of this most necessary of all divine gifts. Tens of thousands who call themselves Christians live and die without ever receiving Baptism; tens of thousands defer the Baptism of their children for weeks and months, thereby exposing them to imminent danger of losing their souls; and stranger still, vast numbers of well instructed Catholics live for months and months in the state of mortal sin, apparently never reflecting on the most certain truth that they are simply wasting their time and keeping their immortal souls constantly suspended over the mouth of hell. Were God as unconcerned about the salvation of human souls as these senseless men and women are, very few indeed would ever be saved.

BUSINESS METHODS

"The just man liveth by faith." ROM. 1, 17.

No one can expect to be successful in business unless he has certain aptitudes or qualifications for the transactions which his undertakings involve. He must be fully acquainted with approved business methods and have the ability to apply them in particular cases. The principal qualifications that come up for consideration in this connection are three in number. The first one, and indeed the most fundamental of all, is a thorough knowledge of the business to be carried on; the second one is confidence in the successful issue of the undertaking; the third is a keen interest in all that concerns the matter in hand. If any of these be lacking, the final issue is extremely doubtful from the very start.

Three similar requisites are demanded of every one who expects to be successful in the business of salvation. He needs knowledge, confidence, interest; or to be more exact, he must have faith, hope and love. Faith, that he may know what is required of him and also the reason why it is required; hope, that he may be endowed with courage and

strength to cope with difficulties; love, that he may act not merely from a sense of duty and personal interest, but also from the higher motive of pleasing God. Hence it is that in Baptism, together with sanctifying grace, are also infused the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. Besides these, God likewise confers all the moral virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, every one of which is intended to make the work of salvation both more easy and secure. However it is with the first three that we are now more particularly concerned; for they are of all others the most essential.

Although the three theological virtues are all absolutely necessary for salvation, nevertheless the most fundamental of them is faith. Of this the Apostle says most emphatically: "Without faith it is impossible to please God and be saved." And the reason is obvious. For the work of our salvation is wholly supernatural in character, and where faith is wanting the supernatural world is wrapt in impenetrable darkness, impervious alike to hope and love. Faith is to the supernatural order what light is to the order of nature; it reveals the existence of that higher world to the searching mind and enables the soul to profit by the blessings of divine adoption. Again faith is the first act of worship demanded by the God of infinite truth. When He speaks to the children of His love,

whether He does so in person as in the days of old, or through His Church as in our day, He necessarily requires unhesitating belief. Where that belief is dutifully accorded to His infallible word, His infinite knowledge and truthfulness receive their proper homage; where it is consciously withheld, both the one and the other are shamefully dishonored. Hence " without faith it is impossible to please God and be saved."

First of all, therefore, we must have faith, that is, we must hold as absolutely true whatever God has revealed, simply because He is Infinite Truth who can neither deceive nor be deceived. And this faith must be so universal that it comprehends everything God may ever be pleased to reveal. In this matter there is absolutely no room for choice. It makes no difference whatever whether we understand the truth of which there is question or whether it goes beyond the reach of our intellectual powers; the mere fact that God has revealed it demands our unhesitating assent. For every statement made by God carries with it the pledge of His infallible word, and upon that word alone our faith is based.

There is special need of emphasizing this at the present time. Credulous as the world is in other respects, it is growing daily more sceptical in regard to revealed truth. With many persons the

daily newspaper is fast supplanting the Bible. They will believe almost any canard trumped up by a brazen-faced press; but when the truths of religion are urged upon their acceptance they shrug their shoulders and ask, how can this be? They accept without thought of contradiction the sentimental drivel of crack-brained charlatans, and unhesitatingly reject the teaching of God's infallible Church. They credit lying men with truthfulness and charge the infinitely truthful God with falsehood. And this ever growing scepticism in matters of religious truth is finding its way even into the ranks of Catholics. Instead of accepting God's infallible word for the faith that is in them, they allow their puny reason to pass its verdict upon what they ought to believe. Hence they presume to discriminate between the different truths that are proposed to their acceptance. Some truths they believe, because reason commends them to their approval; others they reject, because reason can make nothing of them. God may indeed pledge His infallible word for the truths of which there is question; but they quietly pass by the word of God and adjust their faith to suit their fancy. And all the while they flatter themselves that they are excellent Catholics: — so excellent in fact, that they do not hesitate to sit in judgment on priests and bishops and the Pope himself. May God save us from

such a faith, and may He have pity on such Catholics.

Whence does this deplorable condition of things arise? Whence but from the spirit of the age, which is of the earth earthy. It is sometimes said that a man is what he eats, but it is much truer to say that a man is what he loves. Men and women are immersed in things temporal; they love money, crave bodily comfort, hanker after worldly display, and so instead of worshiping God they worship the golden calf. In consequence their thoughts are turned earthward, they become materialized and in due course of time they almost lose the power of apprehending things spiritual. Add to this the popular craze for so-called science. The modern world is science-mad, and this like any other form of lunacy, nay more than all others together, renders impossible the commonsense judgments which lie back of true faith. We are told that it is medieval to admit of anything that does not come within the range of strict scientific demonstration; of anything that cannot be measured by the yardstick or weighed in the balance; hence as the truths of religion do not lend themselves to a demonstration of that nature, they must be looked upon as so many anachronisms by men and women whose good fortune it is to live in an age of scientific enlightenment. It makes little difference that

most of these men and women don't know enough about science to understand even the terms which they use; it somehow has become the fashion to say that science has undone faith, and there the matter ends. They must be in fashion, even though fashion should make them fools. They say science has undone faith, and yet the greatest of modern scientists does not hesitate to declare: "The more I know the more nearly does my faith approach that of the Breton peasant. Could I but know it all, my faith would doubtless equal even that of the Breton peasant woman."

But you will ask: Isn't it reasonable to look for proofs in the matter of faith? As we are reasonable men and women, we can assuredly not be expected to take religious truth for granted. Yes, it is most reasonable to look for proof, and you are not expected to take anything for granted in the matter of religious truth. God has given you reason and reason must prepare the way for faith, but with all that faith transcends reason. Reason must show you, and does show you, that there is a God of infinite knowledge and truthfulness; reason must show you, and does show you, that this God has made known certain truths which He commands you to believe on the sole authority of His infallible word; reason must show you, and does show you, that this same God has entrusted these truths to the

safe-keeping of His Church, over whose teaching in matters of faith and morals He Himself watches all days, even to the consummation of the world: — all this reason shows to any intelligent inquirer, and because reason shows this, hence you are asked to believe the truths of religion, not because you can scientifically demonstrate their inmost nature, but because they are vouched for by the infallible word of reason's God. Is this unreasonable? If so, then we are most unreasonable in nearly everything we do; for by far the greater part of the knowledge that guides us in our daily lives is conditioned by faith, and that too by a merely human faith which does not necessarily exclude error.

No, men do not refuse to believe religious truths because such belief is unreasonable; on the contrary it is its very reasonableness that causes them to boast of their unbelief. As St. James well says: "The devils also believe and tremble." Religious faith carries with it religious obligations, and these obligations are hard to flesh and blood; yet if a man does not comply with them, his faith must make him tremble. Hence it is much more comfortable to live without faith than to have faith and not keep its precepts, and this decides the day.

FAIR PROSPECTS

"He is the God of my help, and my hope is in God." Ps. LXI, 8.

The success of a business venture not rarely depends on the firm conviction that with proper care and energy it may be made a paying proposition. The reason of this is not far to seek. Confidence acts like a tonic; it enables a man to put forth his best energies, makes him clear sighted, and gives endurance and precision to his efforts. Where fear of failure would cause a person to hesitate and thus lose a never returning opportunity for gain, confidence makes him prompt in his decisions and as a result quick to improve every chance for profits as it comes within reach. If not carried to excess, it may become an important factor in the making of a fortune.

In the business of salvation something very similar obtains. There, too, clearness of vision, energy of action, and perseverance of effort are all important, and these are usually in proportion to the hope which one entertains of making it a success. Faith shows us the way we must follow, hope gives us the strength to proceed along that way in spite

of difficulties. From it flow that peace and quiet which are so essential to the persevering practice of Christian virtue, and that joyous anticipation of final success which makes of present sorrows so many harbingers of future happiness. A hopeful heart is never without the warm glow of some half conscious joy, and this infuses into every faculty of the soul a strength and energy that carry all before them in life's many conflicts. Temptations may assail us, misfortunes may overwhelm us; yet as long as hope remains we can resist the one and rise superior to the other. Only when we abandon hope do we fall an easy pray to temptation and to depression of spirit. Hope itself, therefore, must be our hope.

This hope, however, does not mean trust in our own natural strength and ability; but rather trust in the strength and ability that comes to us from God. Hope, like faith, is a supernatural virtue infused into our souls together with sanctifying grace, for the express purpose of making us firmly rely on God's goodness and promises in reference to all that concerns life eternal. No person ever desired his own soul's salvation so strongly and ardently as God desires the salvation of all men without exception. He has created every soul for heaven, and to place the attainment of that high destiny within easy reach of all, He is most lavish

of His never failing help. Not content with bestowing upon all who do what in them lies the precious gift of sanctifying grace, which enables them to perform supernatural acts, He tarries as it were constantly at their side, exhorting, encouraging, strengthening them to fight bravely the good fight, which alone can win for them the crown of eternal life. The world with its many seductions may entice them; the evil spirit with his cunning may try to beguile them; their own fickle hearts may basely betray them: yet amid all these dangers from within and assaults from without, the good God ever watches and wards them as the children of His love. He pours the light of His grace into their understanding and infuses the warmth of His love into their will, and if they will only suffer Him to complete His great work of love, He will lead them safely through all the stress and strain of life's many contentions until they reach that haven of rest where sin shall be no more, nor mourning nor sufferings of any kind. His is the beginning, His the finishing of every soul's salvation.

It is to this active interest which God takes in our eternal welfare that we must look with confidence in all our trials. To this we have a right and title in virtue of our baptismal consecration. When God bids the newly baptized to preserve unspotted the white robe of innocence and to keep ever burn-

ing the light of faith, He pledges His own infallible word that He will supply all the necessary means to make the fulfillment of this injunction possible. He accords to the child born to Him in Baptism, not only the title to heaven, but also the rights and prerogatives of divine sonship, which implies that He on His part assumes all the duties of fatherhood. This is what is meant by the sacramental grace of Baptism, as distinct from sanctifying grace which makes us children of God. The baptized person acquires a vested title to God's special assistance in all the difficulties that may beset his way to heaven. Even as among men a good and kind father will see to it that his children can live in accordance with the requirements of their state in life, so likewise in the supernatural order does God, the best and kindest of fathers, make a similar provision for His adopted children.

As a further foundation of this hope we may take our Blessed Saviour's striking words, whereby He pointed out to His Apostles God's never failing providence even in regard to man's bodily welfare. "The life," He says, "is more than the meat, and the body is more than the raiment." That is, as God bestowed the blessing of life, which cannot be sustained without food, will He not also provide that this food may be obtained in due season? And as He gave the body, which needs the protec-

tion of warm and decent clothing, will He not also make provision that proper raiment shall be at the disposal of all? It is true, in the material order God's providence does not go so far as to cook our meals and to sew our garments; but He supplies in great abundance the raw material out of which by a proper use of our faculties we may satisfy all our bodily wants. And if He generously makes such provisions for the temporal welfare of our bodies, how much more will He not do the same for the eternal welfare of our souls? For is not the soul more than the body? and have we not greater need of the happiness of heaven than of earthly prosperity? It is primarily to this spiritual providence that we must apply God's own consoling words: "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in my hands."

Again, a mere glance at our Blessed Saviour's life and death places this point beyond all doubt. Why did the Son of God become man? Why did the Ruler of heaven and earth take upon Himself the burden of human sorrow? Why did He undergo the scourging at the pillar, the crowning with thorns, and the torture of crucifixion? Why? Because He was so anxious to make possible for us all the salvation of our souls. Nay, not only

that, but He wished to give us a tangible proof of the greatness of that desire, which did not stop short at the sacrifice of all that was near and dear to Him in His human existence. And after going to such extremes in meriting for us the graces and helps necessary for salvation, will He not willingly and bountifully bestow them on us when they are needed? Oh, yes, salvation has its difficulties for all of us; but what are the greatest of difficulties when met with the strength of God? It was this thought that inspired the Apostle when he said: "I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me," and it is this same thought that must accompany us along life's uneven way, not so much smoothing our path but rather enabling us to climb each steep ascent until at last we reach the mountain of peace, where weary from our journey and footsore we shall rest forever in the bosom of our God. It is only then that we shall understand the full significance of those familiar words of Holy Writ: "He hath given his angels charge over thee; to keep thee in all thy ways. In their hands they shall bear thee up: lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

In this connection, however, we must bear in mind that hope in God presupposes good will in ourselves. Hope is a virtue and as such it is equally removed from despair and presumption.

God is most willing to help us save our souls, but He will not save them all by Himself. Only when we do what in us lies can we reasonably look for His assistance. In this respect there is much truth in the old saying, that God helps them that help themselves. This ought to be quite clear to us from what happens in the natural order of things. Were we to sit down idly at home and yet expect to reap the fruit of honest labor, we would be fit subjects for the lunatic asylum. Our common sense tells us that there can be no question of remuneration where no equivalent has been given in personal effort. Just think of a farmer who would neglect to plow his field and sow his seed and then look forward to the blessing of God for an abundant harvest. You would call him a fool, and justly so; yet he would be no greater fool than the man who looks to God's help for the salvation of his soul, when he himself makes no serious effort which by God's help might be blessed with success. In the one case as in the other the necessary condition for God's assistance is wanting, and so that assistance itself looked forward to in vain.

SPECIAL INDUCEMENTS

"The charity of Christ presseth us." II Cor. v, 14.

The more intensely a man is interested in the business which he is carrying on, the greater is usually his success. And the reason is quite obvious. The very fact that he is interested leads him to put forth his best efforts, to make little of difficulties, and to concentrate his energy upon that one object. He is not driven to his daily task like an unwilling slave, but is urged on by an interior force which binds him to his work more effectually than chains of steel could do. His mind and his heart and all his faculties have found an object of common interest, and in consequence the combined forces of his intellect and will are brought to bear upon the successful issue of his undertaking.

It would be very strange if the good God had not made similar provisions in regard to the all important business of salvation. For our salvation is to Him a matter of personal concern; it constitutes the very end and object for which He called us into existence, and to secure its attainment He leaves no means untried. Hence as He bestows the gift of faith, whereby the importance of salvation

is fully recognized, and the gift of hope, whereby a successful issue is confidently expected, so does He also bestow the gift of love, whereby that same salvation becomes an object of the most ardent desire. He could indeed have made the work of salvation merely a matter of duty, but as He deigned to add to His title of Master the sweet name of Father, He made of that duty a labor of love. It is true, the obligation of working for our soul's salvation still remains, and always must remain, because it is objectively identified with the service which we must render our Creator; but it is an obligation which at the same time constitutes our greatest and sweetest privilege. For if it is a privilege to call God our Father, then it must also be a privilege to render Him the obedience of children, and the result of this obedience means the salvation of our souls. Hence to save our souls is neither more nor less than to pay God the tribute of our love.

It was to this sweet disposition of divine Providence that our Blessed Saviour called attention, when He summed up the whole law in this twofold commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy mind: this is the first and the greatest commandment. And the second is like unto this: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On

these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets." And to make the fulfillment of this law of love the more easy and secure, God infuses into every soul adorned with sanctifying grace the supernatural virtue of divine charity, which enables us to tend spontaneously to the possession of the one supreme Good as apprehended by the light of faith. By reason of this virtue we are drawn to what is good and holy, even as by nature we are impelled to whatever subserves our temporal interests. It enables us to concentrate all our faculties upon the one great object of our lives, the salvation of our immortal souls, in very much the same way as an intense interest in his business enables a business man to devote all his energy to the undertaking in which he has invested his entire fortune. It is in effect the supernatural business interest which God has awakened in our souls.

Possibly you will say that you never feel this interest in your soul's salvation; that you are never drawn to God by an interior force, and that you experience little or no inclination to what is good and holy: but that on the contrary all your interests center in worldly affairs and there is a constant downward tendency in the most ardent longings of your souls. This may be true, and yet at the same time you may possess that precious gift of God which was conferred on you for the purpose

of lifting your souls heavenward. We must always bear in mind that knowledge precedes love. Our hearts cannot love that of which our minds are ignorant. It is quite possible that you are without the warmth of love because you are without the light of understanding. Do you ever take time to reflect on the object upon which this supernatural love should primarily be centered? Do you ever think of God as the source of your eternal happiness? Have you ever realized what it means that the mere vision of God shall fill your souls with such unbounded bliss, that no word of yours can ever express a tithe of its surpassing greatness? And if you have not done this, it is but natural that you should not feel drawn to God; because you know Him not.

Suppose you were to spend every day some little time in trying to form a concept of what is meant by the simple statement of your catechism, that God is a spirit infinitely perfect and that the possession of God constitutes eternal salvation. In itself this statement has little power to move our souls. Why? Because we do not grasp its real meaning. It is too abstract, too general; it presents no point of contact with our daily experiences. But suppose you were to think of all the beautiful things that you have ever seen in the world around you; of all that is good and lovable in the lives of

men and women with whom you associate; of all that has ever charmed your eyes, delighted your ears, or captivated your hearts, and then bring home to yourselves by an act of faith that all this is contained in an infinitely higher degree in God, and that all this beauty of your God, all this goodness and this lovableness will one day be yours to have and to hold and to enjoy forever. Don't you think that your hearts would beat faster in anticipation of a happiness so great? Don't you think that the monotonous round of your daily duties would assume a new interest, as you realized that every one of them was intended by God to bring you a step nearer to that world of beauty? Don't you think that the gross and short-lived pleasures of earth would pall on you, as you viewed them in the soft radiance of that glorious eternity? It would be strange indeed, if no such experience should stir the depths of your soul.

Or better still: suppose you were to reflect every day, if only for a few minutes, on the astounding yet most certain truth that this great God, so perfect, so beautiful, so lovable, loves each one of you personally with an intensity and tenderness that have absolutely no parallel in the whole world of human love. Oh, it is sweet to be loved, even by hearts that are as narrow and as selfish as our own. Even human love is full of beauty and of gladness.

Yet what is all human love but a faint and feeble shadow of the love divine that burns in the bosom of the Godhead? And this infinite love of God, how tender it is and sympathetic as it flows in upon our souls from the Sacred Heart of the world's Redeemer! Compared with it, neither the impassioned sense of tenderness of a fond mother for her only child, nor the all absorbing devotion of a bridegroom for his youthful bride, though purest and deepest and most intense, merits even the name of love. It is the boundless love of the Godhead, touched with human sympathy, throbbing with human interests. And all this love, so intense and yet so tender, reaches out to each single one of us as if we were the only beings in existence. It is a most personal love, a love of preference, which, though embracing all mankind, yet pours the entire wealth of its affections into each individual soul. There is something positively intoxicating in the thought, and still it is true even beyond the possibility of a doubt, as we are assured by God's own infallible word. Can we ever think of this and not feel our hearts all aglow with a love that makes us one with the loving heart of Christ? Yet Christ is God, though robed in the weakness of our human nature.

Love is a necessity of our very being; God made our hearts for love, and the more perfect the ob-

ject is upon which our affections are centered, the more intense also our love needs must be and the more exquisite the enjoyment that results therefrom. Even in this world of sordid cares we delight in contemplating what is beautiful; our sweetest enjoyments are derived from what is lovely and fair: not merely in the material order of things, but also and especially in the higher sphere of thought and affection. Hence the entrancing happiness that flows from true friendship, where two kindred souls respond in mutual recognition of their God-given beauty to the divine impulse of unselfish love. Hence, too, the joy and bliss that fills our hearts at the mere thought of a happy home, where soul clings to soul and heart speaks to heart, where the foreglow of heaven's eternal brightness touches even life's commonplaces with a beauty that is born of God. Oh, our hearts are hungering for what is beautiful and fair! for some object whose transcendent loveliness has power to unseal in our souls the sacred fountains of absolute devotion. And all this we find in God, and in its perfection in God alone, who is the source and origin of all that is good and lovable in this fair world of ours. We find it there not robed merely with the majesty of infinite perfection, but suffused with the warm glow of personal devotion. And this God we are

asked to love, and by loving Him to save our souls.

How bright a world this would be, how interesting even the dullest of human lives, if only we would heed this pleading of our God! It is easy to bear poverty and suffering and to make even the greatest sacrifices when love is the impelling motive. It is easy to labor and toil and to cling to the monotonous round of life's daily drudgery when to the sense of duty is added the inspiration of love. And this love is so near to every one of us, so easy and so sweet,— if only we knew, if only we would think — think, as Holy Scripture has it, in goodness of our God.

PRUDENT WAYS

"The knowledge of the holy is prudence." PROV. IX, 10.

A thorough knowledge of the business to be carried on is an essential requisite for success, yet in practice success is not always commensurate with a business man's knowledge. Very much depends on the use which he makes of it, and on his readiness to apply abstract principles to concrete conditions. For this reason it often happens that a man of moderate acquirements, which are supplemented by a highly practical sense, is far more successful than one whose attainments are of the highest order, but whose judgment in the management of affairs is defective. The one is a man of prudence, the other of knowledge, and in a contest between the two it is the prudent man that wins the prize.

The same happens in the supernatural order. Knowledge of our religious obligations is very necessary, but knowledge alone will not save any man. That knowledge must be reduced to act, and in this there is need of prudence. To meet this exigency, the good God infuses into every soul regenerated in Baptism a special virtue, the end

and object of which is to enable its possessor to use his spiritual knowledge to the best advantage. This is the Cardinal Virtue of Prudence. It is called a Cardinal Virtue because it belongs to that special group of moral virtues, four in number, which form, as it were, the hinges upon which the whole moral life of man is made to turn. Or, if you will, it is one of the four foundation stones upon which the solid edifice of a thoroughly moral life must be built. The other three are Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance, which will form the subjects of the following three discourses.

That Christian prudence is of the highest practical importance in the working out of our soul's salvation is quite evident from the nature of the virtue itself. It is a divine gift, bestowed by God for the purpose of perfecting our understanding in reference to the choice and proper use of the means of salvation. These means are various and many, yet not all of them are of equal value and efficacy under all possible conditions of place and time and personal circumstances. Thus, for instance, prayer is a means of salvation, and a very efficacious one, but unless a certain degree of prudence be exercised in the use of it, more harm may come of it than good. Were the mother of a family to spend the greater part of the day in church instead of looking after her household, she would be in a

fair way of losing her soul by praying. So is proper attention to business a practical means of salvation, nevertheless were a man so completely to immerse himself in it as to neglect his religious duties, it would effectually keep him out of heaven. And so in regard to every other means, however holy it may be, it is only the prudent use of it that counts.

This becomes still clearer if we consider the three lines of activity along which the virtue of prudence was intended by God to exert its influence. The first is to make us thoughtful in the ordering of our lives. The prudent man thinks before he speaks or acts; he weighs the advantages and disadvantages of a contemplated line of conduct as they appear in the light of reason and of faith. He does not act on impulse nor is he guided by mere feeling. He understands practically the folly of doing in haste to repent at leisure. There is no precipitation, no thoughtless haste in anything he says or does, but a calm deliberation which gives due weight to the pros and cons of every question. He is mindful of what our Blessed Saviour inculcates when He says: "Which of you having a mind to build a tower, doth not first sit down, and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he have wherewithal to finish it; lest, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not

able to finish it, all that see it begin to mock him, saying: This man began to build, and was not able to finish."

Closely connected with this thoughtful deliberation, and flowing from it as a natural consequence, is the second effect of the virtue of prudence, which finds expression in correctness of judgment. One who sees the full bearing of a question, who understands the importance of the end to be attained and the relation of given means to the attainment of that end, is in a proper position to decide what course of action he must follow. He clearly discriminates between the maxims and principles of the world, which in one form or another are always the outcome of passion, and the maxims and principles of Christ, which are invariably based upon reason and revelation. Such a person's mind is not open to the appeal of mere expediency, and the thought of compromise between right and wrong can never hide its inherent baseness from his clear perception. He is, therefore, in a position to follow the example of our Blessed Saviour, who met every temptation of the evil one with an answer that was absolutely final and caused the angels of heaven to come and minister unto Him. To him are applicable the words of Holy Scripture: "Counsel shall keep thee, and prudence shall preserve thee."

The third effect of the virtue of prudence is complementary of the other two, and manifests itself in execution. Thoughtful deliberation and unbiased judgment are indispensable in the right ordering of one's life, but they are effective only when they are followed up by prompt and consistent execution. It is on this that success ultimately depends. Without it all else is of no avail. Hence our Blessed Lord says very pointedly: "And that servant who knew the will of his lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." Now, this proper execution is interfered with in two ways; first, by procrastination, or by putting off till to-morrow what should be done to-day; secondly, by changeableness of purpose, beginning a good work in real earnest and then for some imaginary reason interrupting it, or discontinuing it altogether. Both of which tendencies, so frequent in their occurrence and so injurious in their effects, are counteracted by the virtue of prudence as it manifests itself in the execution of carefully conceived plans. As it counsels the choice of the very best means to a given end, so does it also incline a person to use these means at the most opportune time and to persevere in their use until the proposed end has been attained.

From this it ought to be quite plain that the

virtue of prudence plays a most important part in the successful issue of the great work of salvation. It is, in fact, the necessary complement of every other virtue in the moral order, and therefore an indispensable requisite to that moral perfection which alone can gain us admittance into heaven. Its importance was beautifully illustrated by our Blessed Saviour in the parable of the ten virgins. They were all virgins, who waited for the coming of the bridegroom in purity of mind and body; yet whilst five of them were admitted to the marriage feast, the other five were forever excluded. Why? Because the former were prudent and the latter were foolish. All knew that their lamps must be burning at the coming of the bridegroom, yet only five of them wisely bethought themselves of the necessary oil, whilst the others foolishly relied on a chance supply. That chance supply failed them at the critical moment, and the result was an irreparable loss of the one happiness for which they had waited so long.

That the world is full of such foolish virgins is painfully evident. Many there are who to outward appearances lead good lives; they are honest, they are decent, they are charitable to the poor, and yet they are not prepared to meet the bridegroom; because the lamps of their lives are without the oil of a practical supernatural faith. They are well-in-

tentioned, but they never consider seriously to what ends their intentions should be directed. To them life is a broad river, and they drift passively onwards whithersoever the force of public opinion or of their own inclinations may direct its ever changing current. Or if at rare intervals they honestly study the situation and then make up their minds to direct their course by the unerring compass of reason and faith, they soon tire of the exacting task and so they catch at the slightest excuse to drift back into their aimless course. It is not knowledge they lack but prudence. They are thoughtless, preoccupied, fickle. They trust their best interests, the one thing that really matters, to the chances of an uncertain future. What wonder that the bridegroom should come before they have supplied their lamps with oil? and what wonder, too, that they should hear from him those terrible words: "Amen I say to you, I know you not"?

And what is to be done to avoid that awful fate? Use the gift that the good God has bestowed on you. He has infused into your souls the virtue of prudence, it is for you to actuate it by serious reflections on your Christian duties as they present themselves in the course of your daily lives, by honest application of the teaching of faith in the shaping of your conduct, and by persevering efforts to measure up to the requirements of the re-

ligion which you profess. The virtue of prudence is not merely an ornament of the soul; it was intended as a principle of action, and principles of actions are meant for use.

JUST MEASURE

"Justice is perpetual and immortal." Wis. 1, 15.

The virtue of prudence is directive in its scope rather than executive. It inclines the mind to consider carefully, to judge correctly, and through this prepares the will for prompt and consistent action. It does not, however, intrinsically perfect the will by bestowing upon it new powers or by intensifying those of which it is already possessed. This belongs to the other three cardinal virtues, each one of which is intended to confer some special aptitude along particular lines of moral perfection. The first of these three, both in the order of importance and in the reach of its effectiveness, is the Virtue of Justice.

In the strict sense of the term, justice is usually referred to the carrying out of law, but considered as a moral virtue it has a much wider significance. As such it stands for the permanent disposition of the will to give every one his due, and in consequence it is coextensive with the entire range of man's duties in reference to the neighbor and to God. Hence the term itself is not rarely used to

signify moral rectitude, which implies universal rightness of principle and practice. Thus Holy Scripture frequently designates perfect holiness by the single term of justice, as when it calls St. Joseph, the foster father of our Blessed Saviour, a just man. There is, however, this difference between moral rectitude and justice, that the latter has exclusively for its object the fulfilment of one's duty in reference to others, whilst the former also presupposes right conduct in regard to oneself. Hence as a virtue, justice inclines the will to give measure for measure in the matter of moral rights and obligations according to the dictates of Christian prudence, and thus it effects through execution what prudence aims at by direction.

If we apply this to the concrete conditions of our lives, it becomes quite manifest that the virtue of justice exerts an almost uninterrupted influence on the work of our salvation. For there is scarcely a moment of the day during which we are not called upon to discharge some duty either in regard to God or to our fellow men, and as every duty has its own proper measure, justice necessarily enters into its fulfilment as a determining principle. For clearness' sake, it may be well to consider these duties somewhat in detail, that so we may realize to some extent the greatness of God's blessing conferred on us by the bestowal of this virtue.

First, then, as regards our relations to our fellow men. The very fact that we are social beings gives rise to duties and obligations which we cannot ignore or evade as long as we continue our sojourn here on earth. We are not merely so many individual entities, thrown together at haphazard like a heap of stones piled up by the wayside, but integral parts of one harmonious whole, mutually dependent on one another as are the various members of our bodies. Each one of us has indeed his own destiny to attain, and as such we all have our personal rights, but each individual destiny is interlinked with those of others, and as an inevitable consequence to every right there is a corresponding duty. Thus if we take the smallest unit of the body social, the family with its constituent members, we find there a reciprocity of rights and duties that binds all together as one consistent whole. Parents have rights over their children and children have duties towards their parents; but neither are the duties of children without corresponding rights in reference to their parents nor are the rights of parents unaccompanied by duties toward their children. Parents have a right to command but they have also a duty to love, and children have a duty to obey but they have also a right to exact love. Parents must provide

for their children in their infancy, but children must make a like return to their parents in their old age. And so along all the lines of human weakness and strength do parents and children depend on one another for mutual help and support, and to this they are entitled not merely in charity but as a matter of strict justice.

Again, the wife must be subject to her husband, "because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church"; but the husband must also love his wife, because the wife is the body of the husband, as the church is the body of Christ. Matrimony is a contract as well as a sacrament, and as such it gives rise to rights and duties that affect both parties. The husband who plays the tyrant is guilty of injustice no less than the wife who defies her husband's lawful authority. After they have accepted one another, "to have and to hold, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do them part," mutual love and helpfulness is no longer a matter of choice but of strict duty, and where that duty is disregarded there is committed as truly an injustice as in the violation of conjugal fidelity. The one may be more shocking than the other, it may be a graver sin, but it does not differ from the same in its relation to justice. Both are

a violation of personal rights that are based upon a solemn contract, and as such they belong to the same class of criminal misdeeds.

A similar condition of things, as regards rights and duties, obtains in all the various orders of human society at large. No society can possibly exist without some kind of government that has authority to command, and consequently no one can live in society without being in duty bound to obey. Liberty is indeed regarded as the greatest treasure of free-born men and women, but liberty is not license. Nay, due subjection to just laws is an essential requisite for the enjoyment of true liberty; for without it might would be right and the license of the strong would make slaves of the weak. Hence as man was destined by his Creator to live in society, he is in justice bound to obey the laws by which society is governed. Nor is this duty unaccompanied by corresponding rights. As citizens have the duty to obey the laws of their country, so have they also the right to demand that these laws be in accord with justice, and hence those in authority are as strictly bound to be just in enacting laws as subjects are in keeping them.

Very much the same is true of private individuals in their various relations with one another. Thus the employer and his employés, dealers and customers, masters and servants, teachers and pu-

pils, all without exception have in virtue of their position certain well defined rights and duties that cannot be disregarded without a violation of justice. Nay, even where these specific relations do not exist, where man meets man simply as belonging to the same order of beings, justice has still its demands on all, in as much as every one has a right to his life, to his good name, and to his property, which right necessarily supposes corresponding duties in all the rest. In this sense, as in so many others, every one is his brother's keeper.

As regards our relations to God, the matter assumes a somewhat different aspect, in as much as God cannot strictly be said to have duties towards us. It is true, as He called us into being He must in some way provide for our existence, and as he adopted us as His children He must enable us to reach heaven; but this necessity is on His part a matter of fidelity rather than of justice. He owes it to Himself to supply His creatures with all they need for the attainment of their appointed end; but in these creatures themselves there is nothing that can lay Him under any obligation. They are simply His handiwork, and in regard to them His own infinite perfections alone can prescribe His rule of action. Hence the Apostle so well says: "O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it:

Why hast thou made me thus? Or hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" Even as the potter's clay, "so is man in the hand of him that made him."

Yet, whilst God has thus, strictly speaking, no duties towards us, we have most certainly duties towards Him, and that in the strictest sense of the term. The very fact that He is our Creator demands of us absolute submission to all His laws and ordinances, whether they have a direct bearing upon our individual lives or affect us only indirectly through the society of which we are members. He has indeed given us freedom of will, but that freedom is only physical and as such it does not exempt us from moral obligation. He necessarily binds our will by the command of faithful service, and although we have the physical power to disregard that command, we are nevertheless morally bound to execute it in all particulars; for in all things the will of the Creator is the law of the creature. He is at once our Creator, our God, our Father; and as our Creator, we owe Him submission; as our God, we owe Him worship; as our Father, we owe Him love. To Him belongs all we are and have, and to Him must likewise belong all we can accomplish; for whose the tree is, his also the fruit must be.

Along all these lines, therefore, so many and so various, did the good God intend that we should be assisted in doing our duty by the virtue of justice.

TEMPERATE HABITS

"He that is temperate shall prolong life." Eccli. xxxvii, 34.

Although justice has for its object the fulfilment of one's duty in reference to others, it leads also, at least in an indirect way, to the faithful discharge of duties in regard to one's self. For this fidelity is necessarily included in the keeping of God's law, which enjoins proper regard for self as well as for the neighbor. If it is our duty to love others, then it is also our duty to love ourselves; if we are forbidden to injure others in life or limb or good name, then we are also forbidden to injure ourselves: for God wills our own well-being no less than theirs, and His will is the supreme law of our actions.

It is, however, as a general rule, much more difficult to be faithful towards one's self than towards others; because the law of sin, which is in our members, is constantly fighting against the law of our mind and all too often succeeds in dragging us down to the very brink of ruin. The concupiscence of the eyes, the concupiscence of the flesh and the pride of life, are strong in all of us,

and unless we curb them with bit and rein and guide them with a strong hand, they will soon dash us to pieces in their headlong course. It is in this difficult task of self-government that the good God comes to our assistance by infusing into our souls a special virtue, whose object it is to moderate the natural tendencies and inclinations of our sin-stained nature. This virtue is called Temperance.

In a general way the virtue of temperance has its influence upon every virtuous action, because where moderation is wanting virtue degenerates into vice; but specifically it is intended to keep within due limits the cravings of our animal instincts. These instincts manifest themselves especially in the desire for food and drink and in the craving for carnal pleasures. In themselves, and if kept within proper bounds, these desires and cravings are perfectly legitimate, in as much as they were implanted in our nature for the purpose of securing the preservation of the individual and of the species; but owing to the downward tendency of the material part of our being, and more especially owing to the corruption of sin that has left its sting in our members, they easily carry us to shameful excesses and thereby become the source of untold evil. Instead of being used as means to an end, they are all too often made an end in themselves, and then, as the Apostle so strongly ex-

presses it, they change the followers of Christ into enemies of the cross, "whose end is destruction; whose God is their belly; and whose glory is in their shame."

How very real this danger is, and consequently how greatly we all need the virtue of temperance, a little reflection will easily show. First as regards the desire for food. This is the least dangerous, and yet to what excesses does it not give rise! It is much to be feared that even the best of us are at times more intent upon the pleasure that arises from eating than upon the strengthening of our bodies for the service of God. Yet this strengthening is the real end for which food was provided by divine Providence. The pleasure resulting from eating was principally intended as an inducement to take food when needed; it was not meant as an end in itself. Hence, although we may legitimately enjoy this pleasure, still this enjoyment must not be the ultimate reason of our feasting. If it is, we belong to that class of men "whose God is their belly."

If we apply this to the ways of the world, it is all too plain that many men and women stand condemned as the vilest Sybarites in the matter of food. With large numbers of them it is not wholesome nourishment that is craved, but the rarest delicacies which money can buy. Over-indulgence

has long since destroyed their natural appetite, and now they have recourse to artificial means in order to enjoy the pleasure of eating. They do not eat in order to live, but live in order to eat. Tens of thousands of their poorer brethren may look in vain for a crust of bread to satisfy the cravings of hunger; that does not interfere with their selfish indulgence. Like Dives of old, they feast sumptuously every day, and to poor Lazarus they will not give so much as the crumbs that fall from their tables. Well, they will die as Dives died, and God grant that they may not, like Dives, be buried in hell!

Nor is it merely in the quality of food that excesses are committed, but also in the quantity that is consumed through sheer self-indulgence. Nature has assigned to each individual a certain measure, which is calculated to make him feel comfortable and enables him to do his work without inconvenience from one meal until the next; whatever is taken beyond that exceeds the bounds of temperance and does harm instead of good. To continue eating until one can eat no more, or to eat at all times, is to follow the ways of brute beasts and disgraces in man the image of the Godhead. It is because of this over-indulgence that so many ruin their health, unfit themselves for active exertions, fall victims to vicious habits, and

sink into an untimely grave. Had they exercised prudent self-restraint in the line of food, they would have been both healthier and happier men.

And if intemperance in eating can be the cause of so much harm, what evils may one not rightly expect to result from intemperance in drinking? For in this matter there is usually not a question of innocuous beverages, such as the good God has provided for the slaking of thirst; but of vile concoctions that poison the body, kill reason, and make of man a veritable brute. The swine that wallows in the mire is an object of disgust, but an object of greater disgust is the drunkard who staggers with unsteady step until he tumbles down anywhere in a senseless heap. What a disgrace to humanity such a drunkard is! That reeling, tottering, gibbering thing a man? That driveling, lascivious, foul-mouthed thing the image of God? Oh, the horror of it, the pity and the shame!

Yet more painful than this personal degradation, unspeakable though it be, is frequently the harm brought upon others by this brutish indulgence. What awful things happen in the families of drunkards only they can tell whose lives and homes have been hopelessly ruined by the very persons who should have been their guardians and protectors. How many a maltreated wife has not dreaded the home-coming of her drunken husband, whose kisses

and caresses of years gone by have long since given place to blows and foul imprecations. How many a poor child has not looked with horror upon domestic scenes that are burned like a curse into the memory of life's early years. There is no need of dwelling on the grewsome details of these ever recurring tragedies; they are too well known to call for rehearsing. Broken hearts and blighted homes bear witness to the havoc wrought by the demon of drink throughout the length and breadth of the land. Young and old, men and women, have sacrificed their self-respect, their homes and their happiness, and it may be, their very souls to their cravings for the poisoned cup. Surely, where such horrors occur there is need of the virtue of temperance; for without it the world must needs become a hell.

Nor is there less need of this virtue in order to keep in check men's cravings for carnal pleasures. These pleasures are in reference to the propagation of the species what the pleasures of eating and drinking are in regard to the preservation of the individual. If indulged in for that purpose, and under conditions established by God Himself, they are legitimate and harmless; but if sought for their own sake and beyond the narrow limits established by God's law, they mean death to the soul and in many instances ruin to the body. Many

an untimely grave is filled with the votaries of lustful pleasures, and many a lunatic asylum receives its yearly quota from the same ranks. Were God to punish transgressions of this kind with fire and brimstone, as He did of old in the case of Sodom and Gomorrha, it is much to be feared that most of our cities would long since have been changed into so many Dead Seas of unbroken silence. For His own wise purposes, He refrains from such extraordinary manifestations of His anger, but nature's laws work out His curse upon the perpetrators of these crimes with inexorable rigor. Sooner or later there will be an awful wreck, either physical or moral, and more commonly both.

It is in this as well as in the matter of food and drink that the virtue of temperance exerts its moderating influence. It not only tends to eliminate all lustful actions, but even to stifle the thought and desire of them as they arise in mind and heart. And this is most necessary; for where mind and heart are given over to uncleanness, the body cannot remain chaste and ruin is inevitable. Besides, in this delicate matter, unlawful thoughts and desires are deadly in their effects upon the soul; even the least of them, if wilful and deliberate, destroys the soul's spiritual life and merits eternal damna-

tion. For "whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart," and the adulterer "shall not possess the kingdom of heaven."

RESOLUTE AND BRAVE

"Finally, brethren, be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of his power." EPHES. VI, 10.

There are few callings in life, if indeed there are any, that do not from time to time demand resolute action and brave endurance. On such occasions cowards and weaklings are crushed to the ground, and only the brave and the strong prove equal to the test. For man's life on earth is a warfare, and he who would succeed in it must have a warrior's courage and a warrior's strength.

This holds true also if life be viewed in its supernatural aspect. Fiercer battles are daily waged in the hearts of men than were ever fought on the bloodiest field of honor. "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in high places." Hence our Blessed Saviour so well says: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." Hence, also, the Apostle exhorts us so earnestly: "Therefore take unto you the armour of God, that you

may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect."

This "armour of God" consists chiefly in the Cardinal Virtue of Fortitude, which is infused into our souls along with sanctifying grace and together with the other moral virtues enables us "to stand in all things perfect." Its purpose is to strengthen our will, so that we may be patient in sufferings, courageous in dangers, and persevering in the carrying on of difficult enterprises. It is a virtue that enabled the martyrs of old to brave the refined cruelty of their persecutors and to endure the loss of life without a sigh of regret. It is a virtue that enables every sincere Christian to take up the cross of life's many trials daily, and to follow steadfastly the royal road of suffering hallowed by the bleeding footprints of their crucified Leader. Through it the weak become strong and the timid courageous, so that they can truly say with the Apostle: "In all things we suffer tribulation, but we are not distressed; we are straitened, but are not destitute; we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken; we are cast down, but we perish not."

First of all, therefore, this virtue of fortitude gives patient endurance in sufferings, and this is of the highest moment. Even the brightest of human lives have flung athwart them the shadow of the cross. Some there are who suffer an agony of

pain in their bodies, and others who endure greater agonies of anguish in their souls. Some experience the misery of poverty all the days of their life, and others never know what it means to enjoy the blessing of health. Some possess both riches and health, but the greater possession of a good name and peace of soul has been taken from them by the slanderer's tongue. Sooner or later, in one way or another, the chalice of suffering will be presented to us all, and drink it we must. Then it is that we need the virtue of fortitude, so that when we pray with our agonizing Saviour: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me," we may find strength to add with Him: "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." For with such resignation in our hearts and with such a protestation of submission on our lips, we may safely look up to heaven for the angel of consolation, who will change all our sorrows into joy.

Nor is it in our sufferings only that this virtue is to us the "armour of God," but also in the many temptations that beset us on our way to heaven. To endure sufferings patiently requires the strength of a giant, but to withstand temptations steadfastly calls for the heroism of a saint. Temptations in one way or another always make their appeal to our natural desire for happiness,

and therein lies both their strength and our weakness. In fact, the conflict with temptations is simply a conflict with ourselves, albeit mostly with our lower selves, and that carries with it all the dangers and humiliations of internecine warfare. We can secure the victory only by self-defeat, so that every triumph we achieve is necessarily based upon our own disappointment. To keep ourselves pure requires that we stifle the carnal tendencies of our lower nature; to lead a sober and religious life demands that we resolutely repress the cravings of self-indulgence and worldly ambition; and so all along the various lines of moral conflict. It is only upon the stepping stones of our dead selves that we can rise to higher things. To this constant sacrifice of self for the love of God we can justly apply the words of our Blessed Saviour: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend." By conquering self we lose our life for Christ, so that in Him we may find it. To do this generously and perseveringly, undeterred by interior disappointments and exterior humiliations, calls for more than purely human strength, and this greater strength is imparted to us by the Virtue of Fortitude.

Besides this patient endurance in sufferings and temptations, the virtue of fortitude also imparts to us an indomitable courage, whereby we are enabled

to overcome even the greatest difficulties in the practice of our religion. When our Blessed Saviour said to His Apostles: "Every one therefore that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven; but he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven," He pointed to the necessity of boldly professing our religion even under the most trying circumstances. In other matters it may at times be lawful to make compromises, but where religion is at stake every compromise is a denial of Christ before men, and that draws after it eternal reprobation. In this, therefore, there is a special field for the virtue of fortitude to exert its influence.

That the open profession of one's religion may at times call for heroic courage need hardly be proved. Thus when the martyrs of old were given the choice either to deny their faith in Christ or to endure the most atrocious torments, it was only a superhuman fortitude that enabled them to remain faithful to their religious convictions. To sacrifice one's life for any just cause is rightly accounted heroic, even if that sacrifice be consummated by one stroke of the sword; but if the immolation be long drawn out, so that the loss of life would seem small in comparison to the tortures endured, the heroism

of it all becomes truly divine. Yet Christ demands such heroism even from weak human beings such as we are, wherever the want of it would lead to a denial of faith or a surrender of religious principles in one's conduct before men.

Perhaps you will say that the era of persecution is past, and therefore heroism is rarely called for in the profession of one's faith. Well, yes, persecutions of the type which a Nero and Diocletian delighted in have more or less gone out of vogue, but others still are, and always will be, in fashion, to which in one way or another all the followers of Christ are called upon to submit without flinching. Sometimes they are the work of infidel governments, which interfere with the freedom of religious worship demanded by the Church, forbid the education of children in the faith of their parents, expatriate men and women because of their fidelity to the vows by which they bound themselves to the service of God and the neighbor, and in a variety of other ways force their Christian subjects to choose between worldly prosperity and loyalty to their God. At other times they proceed from private individuals, who scoff at religious observances and hold up to ridicule all that is most sacred in the Church of Christ. When these things happen, our faith is necessarily put to the test. Then

we are called upon to suffer losses and injuries, to endure ridicule and contempt, and thus confess Christ before men. To do this, not for the passing moment only, but for months and years, as so often happens, requires courage of the very highest order, and this courage comes to us through the virtue of fortitude. It gives us a share in the glory of the martyrs, although we do not, like them, have the good fortune of being allowed to shed our blood for Christ.

Nor is there a lack of such occasions to confess Christ boldly before men even where these extraordinary difficulties do not occur. To practice one's religion faithfully, not merely by a conscientious observance of the sabbath day, but by a loyal adherence to its principles in our daily lives, calls for a courage and endurance that tax our powers to their utmost limits. Only a strong and resolute will can consistently say "no" to the thousand and one allurements which the worldly world is forever flinging across our path. Well did our Blessed Saviour say: "How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!" This straitness of the way hems us in on every side; it calls for sacrifices at every step. Here we must part from a friend who would lead us into evil, there we must renounce magnificent prospects which come between us and

our God: — it is no, and no again, until we become heartsick at the thought of it. Surely, we need to "be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of his power."

FURTHER HELPS

"I have laid help upon one that is mighty." Ps. LXXXVIII, 20.

The four Cardinal Virtues form, as it were, the groundwork upon which the edifice of our moral life must be erected; yet with them the number of moral virtues is by no means exhausted. Around them cluster a variety of others, less fundamental indeed, yet in their own way powerful helps in the great work of salvation. They are all infused into our souls by the good God at the moment of justification, and they remain there as active principles of the spiritual life so long as we persevere in the state of grace. It would be highly interesting, and instructive as well, to consider them in detail; but as that would carry us too far afield, we must be satisfied with just glancing at a few of the more important, so that we may be able to form at least some idea of how exceedingly generous our Heavenly Father has been with us in the matter of supernatural endowments.

The first place among these subordinate moral virtues is usually assigned to that of religion, which brings us into direct and most intimate relation

with our God. Objectively it consists in a permanent supernatural disposition of the will to yield God that submission and reverence which are His due as the Supreme Being, and to manifest the same by outward acts of worship. Worship of God is our first and most essential duty, and to assist us in the performance of this duty is the end and object of the virtue of religion. It finds its actuation primarily in the offering of prayer and sacrifice, both of which are by their very nature formal acts of worship; but it exerts its influence also in every other good work that tends to the greater honor and glory of God, since such works necessarily proceed from a heart that is reverentially submissive to the Supreme Being as the Sovereign Lord and Creator of all. Hence St. James says very pointedly: "Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation; and to keep one's self unspotted from this world."

Closely connected with the virtue of religion is that of penance. It tends to compensate God for the injury inflicted upon Him by sin. This it effects not merely by inclining the will to elicit acts of contrition, but also by inducing us to perform such works as are demanded by divine justice in satisfaction for sins committed. In many things we all offend, and hence we all have need of the

virtue of penance. Even after the guilt of sin has been removed either by an act of contrition or by the sacrament of penance, there still remains, as a general rule, a certain amount of temporal punishment, which we must cancel either in this life by performing acts of penance or in the world to come by enduring the pains of purgatory. Now it is very much to our advantage to satisfy divine justice here on earth, because by doing so we not only pay our honest debts but also lay up a treasure in heaven, since through God's mercy every penitential act is meritorious of an eternal reward. And through the same mercy of God this is made exceedingly easy; because under the influence of the virtue of penance every good act may be directed to this end. If we make the intention to do all and suffer all in satisfaction for our sins, all our prayers and good works and sufferings become thereby so many acts of penance. In this manner we have it in our power not only to satisfy for our own sins, but also to offer satisfaction for the sins of others, according to the disposition of God's mercy in their behalf.

From the virtue of penance there is a natural transition to that of patience; because penance is, as a general rule, disagreeable to human nature, and to put up with disagreeable things there is need of patient endurance. As a moral virtue patience

consists in that supernatural disposition of the will which enables us to bear with perfect resignation all the trials and contradictions and sufferings which divine Providence permits to come upon us in the course of our lives. In its nature it is closely allied to the cardinal virtue of fortitude, even as the virtues of religion and penance are allied to the cardinal virtue of justice. How very important it is appears both from the frequent occasions which we all have to exercise it and from the high moral value which it imparts to our lives. Trials of one kind or another occur so often, even in the happiest of lives, that Holy Scripture terms man's life on earth a temptation, or as another version has it, a warfare; and if we would bear these trials in a truly Christian spirit, we must needs exercise ourselves in the virtue of patience. Doing this, we draw ever closer to Him "Who, when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not; but delivered himself to him that judged him unjustly." And hence St. James so well says: "Patience hath a perfect work."

Whilst speaking of patience, a word must also be said about the virtue of meekness. These two virtues are so closely related that they almost seem identical; yet they are quite distinct in their scope and purpose. Meekness is opposed to irascibility, and as such its object is to repress all unjust anger

and to preserve due moderation when anger is just. Most of us have still a good deal of the savage in us, which manifests itself in angry emotions whenever someone has the temerity to cross us in our purposes. Although this tendency is natural, and therefore not necessarily sinful; yet if it be not kept in proper check, it may become the cause of great harm both to ourselves and to others. As Holy Scripture has it: "Anger hath no mercy, nor fury when it breaketh forth: and who can bear the violence of one provoked?" Hence to counteract this savage disposition of our sinful nature, the good God gave us the virtue of meekness, which enables us to follow reason even amid the turmoil of passion. Without this virtue civilized life would be impossible, and the home would soon become a hell. On the other hand, where this virtue is allowed to exert its influence, there peace is found and the blessings of heaven. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land."

To these we might add quite a number of other moral virtues, such as modesty, obedience, gratitude, generosity, all of which help us in their own special way to walk the narrow path that leads to life everlasting. However, as this would require a rather lengthy treatise, we shall consider only one more, which, on account of its fundamental importance, it would be unpardonable to pass by

without comment. This is the virtue of humility. Of all the other moral virtues there is none that we find so repeatedly and so earnestly insisted upon by our Blessed Saviour. He Himself practiced it to such an extent, that we can never even think of Him without being reminded of His profound humility. He was humble in His birth in the stable, humble in His life at Nazareth, humble in His death upon the cross. He stands before the world as the very incarnation of the spirit of humility — of a humility that staggers human pride and brings to naught all vain pretensions of men.

Humility is not one of the great virtues, such as faith, hope and charity, yet it is equally indispensable; for without it all other virtues are vitiated and the practice of them becomes impossible. In this sense it is the foundation of all the rest. Here, however, we must well understand what is really meant by humility. It does not consist in self-depreciation, as most people seem to think; but rather in a just appreciation of God's greatness and our own comparative littleness. It does not blind us to our own worth and value, but makes us refer all to God as the author of every good gift. As a moral virtue, humility has a twofold tendency. First, it restrains our inordinate pride which leads us to arrogate to ourselves perfections we do not possess; secondly, it inclines our will to

acknowledge our littleness in accordance with truth. Neither tendency is opposed to true greatness, but rather a necessary prerequisite of the same. In fact, true greatness is but a flower that blossoms upon humility. Hence the greatest of all men, the God-Man Christ, was also the humblest, and His most important lesson is contained in those simple words: "Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest for your souls."

We often wonder why our lives, in spite of our best efforts, remain so imperfect; why we are so prone to sin, why we are so weak in temptation, why our prayers are so ineffective, why even the use of the sacraments has so little power to correct our evil habits. The answer in most cases is simply this: we are not as humble as we ought to be. Instead of acknowledging our weakness and seeking strength in humble prayer, we look to our own merits and demand as a reward what can be obtained only as an alms. It is in pride, in unreasoning pride, that our weakness lies; for "God resisteth the proud, but to the humble he giveth grace."

III

THEORY AND PRACTICE

BUSINESS STANDARD

"I endeavor to have always a conscience without offence towards God and towards men." Acts xxiv, 16.

Every respectable business man is governed in his various transactions by certain fundamental principles, the consistent application of which determines the morality of his conduct. The more exalted these principles are and the more conscientious their application, the greater also becomes the moral worth of his actions and the fairer his reputation in the business world. His word is as good as his bond, and his customers soon learn to rely implicitly on the honesty of his deals. His business standard is of the very highest order and every deal he makes carries with it the full measure of its moral value.

In the business of salvation we have need of a similar standard. There too we must shape our conduct in accordance with certain unalterable principles, which have been laid down by God Himself as the foundation of Christian morality. These principles are objectively identified with the law of God, not only as it is indelibly engraven on the human heart, but also as contained in the higher

code of revealed religion. Man was not made to be a law unto himself, and therefore the work of his salvation cannot be carried on as a matter of caprice. The law of human actions is the will of God, and that will is as unchangeable as God Himself. What is virtue to-day cannot be vice to-morrow, and although circumstances may alter cases, yet the principles which give each human action its moral value admit of no alteration. A morality that changes with the variations of personal interests is not of God, and such human actions as receive their moral value from this changeable standard cannot lead to God. They are born of self and self is their only end.

In the abstract this is indeed sufficiently clear, yet in the concrete conditions of human life it is not without serious difficulties. It is easy enough to say that we must do the will of God and thus work out our soul's salvation, but how are we to know what is the will of God in regard to each particular action as it presents itself in the course of our daily lives? In this there is no longer question of mere abstract principles but of their practical application, and this has its difficulties even for men and women of serious purpose. To obviate such difficulties the good God has given each one of us a guide, whom we can consult at any moment and whose decision is always sure of the divine ap-

proval. This guide is our conscience, which in effect is neither more nor less than God's own voice speaking in the sanctuary of our hearts. It is with us at reason's earliest dawn and does not depart until life's course is run,— nay, not even then, but will continue with us for all eternity in the final sentence of our Judge.

In the concrete conditions of life it is the relation between conscience and conduct that differentiates the sage from the fool and the saint from the sinner. When conscience speaks the wise man listens and the saint obeys; but the fool stops his ears and the sinner walks his own stubborn way. Man's obedience to the voice of his conscience is the exact measure of his moral worth, and by it alone can he achieve lasting success in the doing of his work. A man who is true to his conscience is true to his God, and no power under heaven can make him swerve from duty's path. To him may be entrusted the wealth of nations, yet will he not divert so much as a farthing from its legitimate use. To him may be confided the secrets of hearts, yet will he not betray them even at the cost of his life. He scouts the modern subterfuge of a multiple conscience, which leads so many to follow one line of conduct in their private relations and another in public affairs, to adopt one moral code in their dealings with friends and another with strangers. He

has no "diverse weights and diverse measures," because he knows that "both are abominable before God." In the privacy of his own chamber and in the full glare of public notice his conduct is consistently one, because wherever he is and in whatever he does his actions measure up to the same unalterable standard, the law of God interpreted for him by the voice of his conscience.

In order to realize this happy result in our own lives, we must first of all well understand what conscience really is. It consists in a practical judgment based upon previous knowledge, and as such it has little or nothing to do with feelings. We sometimes say that we feel such and such a thing to be wrong and such another thing to be right, but that is merely a figurative way of speaking, which, if true at all, only indicates that there is in our minds a latent conviction for which here and now we can assign no particular reason. Mere feelings are a very unsafe guide, for although they may at times point out the true morality of an action, yet they just as often misrepresent it in a most unaccountable way. Hence when such feelings do occur, instead of allowing ourselves to be led by them, we must fall back upon our knowledge concerning the matter in question and then form an honest judgment as the case requires. That judgment is the verdict of our conscience, and

by it we must stand or fall. So true is this that even the sentence of our Judge on the great day of final reckoning will in effect be nothing more than a confirmation of the judgment which we ourselves have honestly and sincerely pronounced upon our lives here on earth. Before God our actions are precisely such as we know them to be in our own judgment.

From this view of the matter two consequences follow, both of which are of the greatest importance. The first is the fact that a person may gradually acquire a false conscience as he may form a warped judgment. For as conscience necessarily speaks through the intellect, the truth of its utterances must needs depend upon the correctness of our intellectual views. Hence if a person allows himself to be ruled by passion instead of being guided by reason, his views concerning the morality of certain actions become ever more distorted and in time he may arrive at such a pass that his conscience actually approves of the evil which he does. It is only in this way that the apparently peaceful lives of worldlings, sensualists, and habitually dishonest persons can be explained. In the beginning of their evil career they realized the iniquity of their actions and they felt the sting of conscience, but perseverance in evil-doing little by little distorted their moral judgment and conscience became

the abetter of their sins. It is true, in their sane moments they still apprehend in a confused way the awfulness of their condition and at such times their outraged conscience will speak the truth in spite of themselves; but their dread of that voice makes them careful to avoid these lucid intervals and so they live on in a false security until the handwriting on the wall tells them that they have been weighed and found wanting. And what is the morality of their actions as performed in accordance with the dictate of this false conscience? It is precisely such as they made it in the beginning of their evil career. If they were guilty then, they are guilty ever after until by a true repentance they repair their evil past.

The second consequence points to the obligation incumbent on us all to develop our conscience to the best of our powers. Its proper training is a matter of strict duty, and the neglect of it causes incalculable harm both to ourselves and to others. This training consists of two parts, the one theoretical the other practical. The theoretical part is identical with the acquisition of such knowledge as will enable us to discharge properly the various duties of our state in life both as citizens and as Christians. Ignorance of our obligations may at times save us from sin, but not rarely that ignorance itself is a sin, because it implies culpable neglect.

As God has called us to lead good Christian lives so has He also called us to learn in what a good Christian life consists. Hence the necessity of religious training in childhood and early youth, and the imperative duty of keeping up that training in maturer years. It is for this that we have instructions and sermons in our churches and that the reading of religious books is so strongly recommended. A person who habitually neglects these opportunities of acquiring the necessary knowledge of his religion and of his various duties in life is in a fair way of forming a false conscience, for which he will be held accountable on the day of judgment. If we are bound to keep the law then we are also bound to know it.

The practical part of this training consists in reducing our knowledge to acts; that is, in doing what we know to be right and in avoiding what we know to be wrong. It is in this that conscience was meant to be the guide of our lives, and it is this that gives it that delicacy and correctness which are indispensable in the successful working out of our salvation. Nor is there anything very difficult about this except in so far as the practice of virtue is always more or less distasteful to human nature vitiated by sin. All that is required is honesty with ourselves and a good will to do our duty as we see it. Thus, for instance, when conscience tells us that

we must hear Mass on Sundays, that we must not eat meat on Friday, that we must give a fair day's work for a fair day's wages, we see clearly enough where our duty lies; and if we have a corresponding good will, we cannot fail to encourage our God-given guide to point out the way that we should walk. If this be done consistently in respect to all the various obligations of our state in life, our conscience will become more sensitive in its perceptions and more correct in its utterances with each passing day, and after leading us on from virtue to virtue in this life, it will safely conduct us to the haven of eternal rest in the life to come.

APPRENTICESHIP

"As the days of thy youth, so also shall thy old age be." DEUT. XXXIII, 25.

When a young person wishes to learn a trade or to take up a certain line of business, he usually passes through some sort of apprenticeship, a time of practical study and training along the lines which he intends to follow in the doing of his life work. Long experience has taught men that without such a preparation no great results can reasonably be expected even from persons upon whom nature has lavished her choicest gifts. Natural gifts are only the raw material which must be moulded and chiseled and shaped in many divers yet consistent ways before the finished product can be put to profitable use. The more thorough and the more consistent this formative process is, the more satisfactory also will be the results that may reasonably be looked for in after years.

What is thus true in reference to the trades and commerical pursuits in general, finds its verification likewise as applied to the business of salvation. Sanctity is not a matter of inheritance, but of laborious acquisition. Nor is there as a general rule

much hope of acquiring it unless one has had the good fortune of being bound to a strict apprenticeship during life's early years. It is true, in particular cases this apprenticeship may be taken up at a more advanced stage, but that is rather by way of exception and in many instances meets only with partial success. For "as the days of thy youth, so also shall thy old age be." Hence the moral well-being of society depends largely on the religious training of youth, since without religion morality is but a name, a shadow without a substance. Where that training is well looked after individual and social life will be in a flourishing condition; where it is neglected decadence must set in and the final result spells ruin.

It is in this religious training of youth that our modern times are most deficient, and it is from this deficiency that the gravest disorders result in the religious, domestic and social conditions of to-day. Religion is fast becoming a matter of mere Sunday observance, which frequently means little more than rest and amusement; homes are broken up almost as fast as they are made, social order is in many instances maintained only at the point of the bayonet, and all this chiefly because the moral training of youth is practically limited to what may be effected by a purely secular education. Christ has been banished from the class room, and as a result

the commandments of the decalogue have ceased to influence the lives of men. It is all well enough to enlighten the intellect by careful instruction in the different branches of knowledge, but unless this enlightenment goes hand in hand with the moral training of the will through the sacramental influences of religion, our educational output can hardly be anything else than a generation of moral weaklings, who, whether in politics or in business or in private conduct, are governed, not by the eternal laws of justice, but by considerations of personal interests and temporal advantages. As you train the child so the man will live; for "the child is father of the man."

Perhaps you will tell me that in this system of secular education room is made for Ethical Culture, which tends "to develop the moral instinct, to fortify the character against temptations to intemperance and licentiousness, and to cherish the love of justice and the capacity for self-sacrifice." Yes, here and there a half-hearted attempt is made to gather from Ethical Culture what should be supplied by Religion, but this attempt can only end in dismal failure. Ethical Culture is a religion without a God; it points to ideal humanity as the one great fact that must be reverenced, and it acknowledges no authority beyond the human will. For the forceful mandate of the Supreme Lawgiver:

"Thou shalt do this, thou shalt not do that," it substitutes the meaningless counsel suggested by self-respect: "It is becoming to do this, it is not becoming to do that." This might do very well for men and women who are confirmed in grace, whose one overpowering desire is to do good and to avoid evil; but for men and women as we know them, whose will, however upright, is swayed by strong passions, it is simply useless. All that Ethical Culture can do is to prescribe rules of etiquette; it cannot enforce the observance of moral principles. Its rules are merely directive, they have no coercive force. As long as personal interest counsels their observance they are kept inviolate, as soon as this incentive is withdrawn they are cast to the winds.

That this is no mere party pleading is quite evident from the utterances of many of the most eminent educators of this country, whose every interest is naturally bound up with the public school system. Thus, for example, President Hyde of Bowdoin College, as early as 1896, declared before the Massachusetts Teachers' Association of Boston: "The public school must do more than it has been doing if it is to be a real educator of youth and an effective supporter of the state. It puts the pen of knowledge in the child's hand, but fails to open the treasures of wisdom to his heart and mind. Of what use is it to teach the child how to read, if he

cares to read nothing but the sensational accounts of crime? These people who know how to read and write and cipher — and know little else; these are the people who furnish fuel for A. P. A. fanaticism — who substitute theosophy for religion, passion for morality, impulse for reason, crazes and caprice for conscience and the Constitution." Since these weighty words were spoken matters have not improved, and similar warnings are uttered almost every day by men who cannot be suspected of party interest.

No, it is not only Catholics who realize that our system of purely secular education is dragging the country down to inevitable ruin; but what distinguishes them from most others is the fact that they have the strength of their conviction and in consequence take effective means to avert the ruin as far as in them lies. It is this that causes them to stand as a nation apart in the educational world. They have no fault to find with the public school system for what it does, but they censure it severely for what it fails to do. The Catholic Church, taught by an experience of nearly two-thousand years, believes that a purely secular education is wholly inadequate to meet the needs of the child. Nay, she is firmly convinced that unless the sacramental influences of religion be daily brought to bear upon the hearts and minds of the young, the

religious and moral side of their nature remains almost entirely undeveloped and in consequence the most important results of education are irretrievably lost. Hence it is that she places Religion as the guardian angel over all her educational work. This, however, does not mean that in Catholic schools an undue amount of time is devoted to religious instruction and that consequently the study of purely secular branches of knowledge is made a side issue, for an impartial investigation of this matter cannot fail to convince anyone of the contrary; but what is principally aimed at, and what is constantly insisted upon, is to surround the pupils with a religious atmosphere, so as to make them realize that religion must form an integral part of their lives and exercise a dominating influence over their actions.

How intensely both clergy and people realize the need of such an education may be gathered from the sacrifices which they make in its behalf. For nearly one-million three-hundred thousand children room and a teaching force must be provided in our primary schools alone, whilst for a quarter of a million more similar provisions must be made in our secondary and higher institutions of learning. Statistics seem to indicate that it costs the State on an average about twenty-three dollars per child to provide a year's schooling in the primary grades,

and if we allow the same rate for the corresponding grades in our schools, we find that primary education alone costs us Catholics nearly thirty-million dollars per annum. If we add to this the outlay for secondary and higher education, together with the taxes which we pay to maintain our public school system and of which conscience forbids us to reap the benefit, it appears that we Catholics pay every year, exclusive of building expenses, over one-hundred-million dollars for the privilege of educating our own children. Of course, as it stands this estimate is too high, owing to the fact that our expenses for teachers and incidentals fall considerably below those incurred by the State; but even so, it is nevertheless a tremendous sum of money, and money that is for the most part paid out by toil-worn hands. Yet it is gladly given, for it secures that which was once appraised at a value infinitely higher — the salvation of souls for which the God-Man poured out His redeeming blood.

And here it is well to remark that this heavy burden does not weigh on our Catholic parents alone, but also, and indeed principally, on our educational institutions and on the religious orders that supply these institutions with teachers. They are not in the business for money-making purposes. If they were, every one of them would have to be recorded on the pages of history as a monumental

failure. In fact, the world little suspects what sacrifices they make to carry on their work. With a few rare exceptions, none of these institutions and orders have any foundation but depend for their maintenance on the tuition fees paid by the students and on such casual gifts as kind friends may bestow; hence it is only by exercising the strictest economy that the necessary expenses can be defrayed. Nor is this ever accomplished except at the cost of constant personal sacrifices. As an example, take the College Department of St. Louis University. It educates some four hundred boys, who are taught by twenty-five professors belonging to the Jesuit Order. Every one of the professors has received, after finishing his College course, at least seven years of special University training to fit him for the work which he is doing, and this training was provided and paid for by the same Order. They are all capable men, and if they were employed in corresponding secular institutions they could, almost without exception, command a salary of from two to five-thousand dollars a year; yet they give their time and talent without receiving any remuneration. No, that is not quite correct; from the tuition fees paid by the boys they are provided with three frugal meals a day, are supplied with decent clothing and with a room which is furnished pretty much as was the prophet's cham-

ber, which had "a little bed in it for him, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick."

And what is done by the Society is done by other religious, who look to no earthly reward for their labor and sweat and for the sacrifice of their lives in the cause of Christian education. Nearly forty-thousand of them, both men and women, are engaged in educational work in this country, and where they receive a remuneration at all, it is usually a mere pittance which barely suffices to supply them with the necessaries of life. The average yearly salary of the sisters teaching in our parochial schools is two hundred and fifty dollars, and that of the brothers engaged in similar work about three hundred; and from this mere trifle they must not only provide for their own maintenance, with the exception usually of lodging, light and fuel, but must also contribute their share to the support of the motherhouse, where future teachers are in training. How they do it is indeed a mystery, yet they have been doing it for years, and will continue to do it as long as the little ones cry for bread. This is their protest against the system of education that excludes God from the class room; this their sacrifice for the cause of Christian morality; this their testimony to the faith that is in them.

LEISURE MOMENTS

"Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly." ECCLES. IX, 10.

Without proper training in youth little can be expected of a man in his maturer years, no matter to what avocation in life he may choose to devote his time and his energy. In one way or another the truth of the poet's words, "the child is father of the man," will find its practical confirmation. Yet early training is not the only condition upon which the success of later years depends. Even the best trained youth may end in hopeless failure unless he endeavors to keep up the work which he so auspiciously began. The most successful men, whether in business or in the professions, are commonly those who have learned to utilize their leisure moments. No matter how pressing their engagements may be, they always find odds and ends of time wherein to pick up something for future use. Each new day teaches them its own lesson and every passing minute pays them toll out of wisdom's treasures.

It is precisely the same in regard to the all important work of salvation. A thorough religious

training is a most valuable asset to start out with in early life, but unless this training is kept up and perfected as year follows year and youth glides into manhood or womanhood, the final result may be very disappointing. It may happen that within a few short years, after persons have escaped from the discipline of the school room, their knowledge of the Catechism amounts to little more than the vague recollection that it is a book containing questions and answers, their familiarity with Bible History and with the Gospel Narrative has dwindled down to a few disconnected facts, and they have no more intelligent appreciation of the religion which they profess than the South Sea Islander has of the blessings of civilized society. On the other hand, however, if the advantages of an early religious training are conscientiously followed up, there results necessarily a broadening of intellectual views and a deepening of religious conviction, which makes Catholic men and women what the Church desires them to be, persons who are able to give a reason for the faith that is in them. They develop almost unconsciously into the fairest and loveliest of all creations, the perfect Christian gentleman and the perfect Christian lady.

And what is to be done to bring about this happy result? Utilize your leisure moments; take advantage of the opportunities for self improvements that

are thrown in your way. There is not a man or woman in this city, or for that matter in any city or town of the Union, who hasn't a fair chance to supplement and perfect the religious training that was begun in childhood days. If there be dense ignorance in religious matters even among Catholics, as unfortunately there is in all too many instances, it is not because opportunities for enlightenment are wanting but because good will to be enlightened is lacking. The fault does not lie with the teaching Church, but with her untaught children.

However, in order to consider this matter somewhat in detail, I would suggest three means the use of which is likely to prove effective. These are: To listen, to read, and to think. Listen to instructions, sermons and lectures whenever the opportunity is offered you; read instructive books, pamphlets, or articles in whatever form they may appear; think over at your leisure what you have heard or read and make it your own. If you will follow this suggestion conscientiously you cannot help acquiring a vast amount of information which will not only make you wiser but also happier men and women. For although knowledge is not happiness, yet if it be of the right kind it points the way to it and then contributes something of its own.

First, then, as regards listening to instructions, sermons and lectures, you have at the present time an opportunity which your forefathers would have given almost anything to have had in their day. Not only is there in practically every church a carefully prepared sermon at the High Mass, but in pursuance of recent legislation there are short practical instructions at one or more of the earlier Masses, intended for those who cannot come later in the day. If these sermons and instructions are listened to in the right spirit, as being the word of God and not merely of man, they will not only keep fresh in your minds the knowledge which you may have already acquired, but add thereto little by little so that you can truly be said to grow in wisdom as in age. Of course, you must not merely hear them, but listen to them and listen with the intention of deriving therefrom some profit for your souls. I am afraid most of us have too much of the critic in our make-up to reap the full benefit intended. We are not rarely more interested in the preacher and his manner of speaking than in the message which he announces in the name of God. We look for flowers where we should be concerned only about the fruit; we long to be charmed by human eloquence when we should desire to be instructed by divine wisdom. Even St. Paul found occasion to complain of this in regard to his own hearers and

to all appearances matters have not improved since his day.

Besides these regular instructions and sermons most churches provide special discourses or lectures on other occasions, as for instance on Sunday evenings during Lent, or perhaps all through the year. These usually treat of topics that have a direct bearing upon religious questions of the day, concerning which every Catholic man and woman should have reliable information. Then there are a variety of lectures given under the auspices of Sodalities, Labor Associations, and similar Societies, where such knowledge may be gathered as will enable our Catholic laity to take an intelligent interest in all matters of public welfare. Sad to say, however, these opportunities are as a general rule but little utilized, and so the good that was intended finds only a limited realization.

The second means suggested is reading. In respect to this it might seem superfluous to urge people on, for everybody reads and reads at every available moment. Yes, everybody reads, but what? Usually the latest scandal or some sensational stuff that is almost too yellow to be of service for dime novels. This indiscriminate reading is one of the greatest curses of the day and sends more souls to hell than almost any other means ever devised by the devil. Murder, robbery, theft, suicide,

and unmentionable crimes are increasing at a most alarming rate, even among those who are little more than children in years, and why? Aside from our godless education, chiefly because these horrors form the mental pabulum served up to the public by our venal press. Newspapers, magazines, and books of fiction rival with one another in doing the devil's work. There is money in it, and for money even the Son of God was sold. It is useless to say that such readings need harm no one; for we all know that what our eyes read our minds think about, and from thoughts to desire and action is but a short step. "Reading," says a famous philosopher, "maketh a full man," but a man may be full either of virtue or of vice; that depends on what he reads.

This very mischief caused by bad books and papers shows more clearly than anything else what advantage may be derived from reading if the matter be well chosen. Good reading inspires good thoughts, suggests high motives, and leads to noble actions in exactly the same way as bad reading causes the opposite results. Hence it is that the Church has always been, and is now more than ever, so solicitous about the books which she puts into the hands of the faithful. Hence, too, it is that our present Holy Father so earnestly urges every family to keep and read Catholic newspapers and

Catholic magazines so as to counteract the deadly poison poured forth in streams by the secular press. These exhortations of the Church are, however, but little heeded, because, we are told, our Catholic newspapers and magazines aren't up to the standard. Perhaps they are not, but whose fault is that? Unless by your subscriptions you coöperate with the self-sacrificing men who publish them they never will have a chance to improve. Were every Catholic family to subscribe to a Catholic newspaper we could have a first-class daily in every city of the Union, and the good that would thereby be accomplished is simply beyond calculation.

It is the same with regard to books and pamphlets, although in this respect we are much better supplied. There are excellent Catholic works on every subject that one could care to read about. Even fiction is well represented and so are the fair creations of the poet's art. If you can't afford to buy them, why not look for them in our Catholic Free Library, which has lately been started. I would recommend that library to the good will of you all. It is still in its infancy and you might all do something towards its development. Many of you have good books at home which you perhaps don't care to read again; send them to the Librarian for the use of others who

are not so well supplied. Or if you can do so, help the good cause along by donations of money so that new books may be secured; it is an investment that will bear interest for eternity.

The third means at the disposal of all to continue the religious training of earlier years is to think. This is with many a rather laborious process, yet it is so necessary that it must be undertaken in spite of all repugnance. Listening to instructions and reading good books will do little good unless it be supplemented by the mental process involved in serious thought. This is to the mind what digestion is to the body; without it there can be no assimilation and consequently no growth. Unless a person will take the trouble to follow up the train of thought suggested by what he has heard or read, he is apt to develop into a mere phonograph, giving forth the views of others without having any convictions of his own. When Holy Scripture says that "with desolation is all the land made desolate; because there is none that considereth in his heart," it points to a profound philosophical principle which finds a most striking exemplification in our day. People read and read without end and never consider in the quiet of their own hearts what may be the meaning of it all; whence as a necessary result their minds become a desolate waste whereon

not so much as a single flower of wisdom will ever grow. Listen and read; yes, but think and think again until you understand what you have heard and read.

A MODEL AND GUIDE

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life." JOHN XIV, 6.

It is a matter of daily experience that the best training, whether in business or in the professions, is derived from constant association with persons who are experts in their own lines and thoroughly devoted to their work. Theoretical studies have their value, and in many instances are indispensable, but unless they be supplemented by practical training under a competent guide they are apt to remain barren of results. By nature man is imitative rather than creative, and in this imitation he depends for success largely upon the model that is put before him and upon the guide who directs his efforts.

What is thus true in the natural order of things finds its verification also in the supernatural order. Even the most thorough course in Christian Evidences would have little power to produce lives of faith and holiness were its theoretical instructions not made practical by the example of every virtue placed before us in the life of Christ. Hence the good God, who has regard to our weakness in all

things, deigned to give us His only Son not merely as a teacher but also as a model. Christ's doctrine is sublime, but His example is inspiring. His doctrine points the way that we must walk, but His example leads us along that way to its happy goal. The one gives light to our mind, the other imparts strength to our will; and it is this strength of will we need even more than the light of understanding. Christ came indeed to redeem us from our sins, but that redemption He wished to make effective by leading us to heaven. Hence He made His whole life, from the crib to the cross, but one continuous practice of those virtues that are indispensable to every one who desires to work out his soul's salvation. Born of a human mother and cared for by a human foster father, he was subject to them in all particulars as the most docile of children; not merely during His childhood years, but till the age of thirty when His Father called Him to other fields of labor. He passed through all the varied phases of human existence, increasing in wisdom and grace as in age before God and men. He shared in all the contingencies of our fallen nature, sin alone excepted. He had His joys and His sorrows, His temptations and His trials, His successes and His failures; yet in all He was the perfect man, neither puffed up by honors nor cast down by contempt.

Christ is quite generally accepted as the great Leader of men, whom in one way or another all must follow; and such He is, but chiefly under this practical aspect. Having in His own divine person walked the way of human trials and human sorrows, He bids all to look upon His life as the pattern after which each human life must be fashioned. Yet it is precisely in this that Christians all too often place themselves in opposition to Christ. Men and women gladly admit the general fact of Christ's leadership, but in its practical application they prefer to interpret it in accordance with their own views. They admire His independence, His sincerity, His wisdom; they reverence His purity, His self-control, His patience; they stand in awe of His sublime self-forgetfulness, which made His life one continued sacrifice for God and the neighbor: — they admire it all, they commend it all, and then they turn away and sigh: This, alas! is not for us to emulate; this is not for weak human beings such as we are. And yet all the while Christ's voice is ringing in their ears, bidding them to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect, to be holy as He is holy, and reminding them that He has given them an example in all things, that as He has done so they may also do.

Whence this divergence between the demands of Christ and the concessions of men? Has He raised

the standard of perfection too high? or do men rate their power for good too low? I think it is neither the one nor the other. For surely Christ cannot demand more of human nature than under the influence of God's grace it has power to accomplish. He knows that nature as only God can know it. He knows it in all its weakness and meanness and littleness. He understands its leanings to evil and its shrinkings from good. He made that nature His very own, so as to meet men on equal terms and thus convince them by His own example of their weakness and their power. He took that nature in His wounded hands, pressed it to His great human heart, and so imparted to it a strength against which no power of hell can ever prevail, except of man's own free choice. No, He has not raised the standard of perfection too high. Nor do men in their serious moments place too low an estimate upon their power for good. In their heart of hearts they know that they can follow the royal road which Christ has hallowed with His bleeding footsteps. If they shrink from walking on that road, it is not so much because they feel the want of strength or the lack of endurance, for like the Apostle they are aware that with the grace of Christ they can do all things; but because seeing another law in their members, fighting against the law of their mind, they allow them-

selves to be captivated in the law of sin which is in their members. It is the old, old story of the eternal conflict between good and evil in the heart of man, and in that conflict man's sympathies are too often enlisted on the side of evil. The good which he approves, he does not; but the evil which he condemns, that he does.

The fact, therefore, that Christ stands before us as the God-appointed model of Christian perfection does not eliminate the necessity of a struggle on our part, but rather accentuates it and beckons us to enter upon that struggle with indomitable courage. It is through this struggle that Christ must be born in us and that we must become so many other Christs. Of this Christ Himself never made the slightest secret. He was indeed heralded as the Prince of Peace, and such He is in very truth, for He brought us a peace such as the world cannot give; but His is a peace that can be maintained only by incessant warfare. Hence those forceful expressions which He made use of when He sent His Apostles on their first missionary tour. "Do not think," He said to them, "that I came to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace, but the sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies shall be

they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for me, shall find it." In these words He sounds the tocsin of war, which has been ringing through the world ever since the fatal cry of the Jewish mob on the first Good Friday morning: "Crucify Him, crucify Him." The purpose of His coming was peace, but a peace that is conditioned by war.

It is here that our judgment is oftenest at fault. We almost unconsciously entertain views of life that cannot be brought into harmony with the views of Christ, and as an inevitable result our lives are all too often but clumsy caricatures of the model after which they are supposed to be fashioned. In spite of our best efforts we find it extremely difficult to rid ourselves of the idea that life here on earth has its own distinct entity, separate and independent of the life beyond the grave; that it was meant to yield us enjoyments and pleasures which are desirable for their own sakes. Yet this is all a fatal delusion. Our existence in time is of necessity a preparation for our existence in eternity, and as our preparation is here on earth such will our

fruition be in heaven. The tendencies of our sin-stained nature are towards evil rather than towards good, and it is the constant struggling against these evil tendencies that constitutes our real life work. This is the cross that was placed on our shoulders at reason's earliest dawn, and with this cross on our shoulders we must follow the cross-laden Christ into the stillness of the tomb. This was His cross,— not indeed His own sins and His own evil inclinations, for in Him there was neither sin nor the concupiscence of sin, but the sins of the world and the evil tendencies of the world,— these He carried from Bethlehem to Calvary, these He overcame by His life of virtue and His death of expiation. In this He is our model, in this He is our leader, and in this we must follow Him even to the hill of crucifixion.

Perhaps you will object that this is taking too gloomy a view of life; that this makes life too serious an affair for men and women who are engaged in doing the world's work. Their life of labor and toil, their daily struggle for existence, their constant sufferings and many disappointments are in themselves a cross that is heavy beyond endurance; why add to it the heavier cross of self-conquest? Do you believe in that objection yourselves? What is the result of your own experience in this line? When does life really become a

burden? When we shape it in accordance with the dictate of reason and faith, or when we allow it to be dominated by passion? Do not our saddest disappointments and acutest sufferings in the end arise from this, that we allow passion to rule where reason and faith should reign supreme? This additional cross may be heavy, but its very weight is a source of strength.

A SPECIALTY

"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." JOHN IV, 34.

Very few business men are interested in every possible variety of commercial pursuits. As a general rule it is found advantageous to specialize along certain definite lines, which are more or less in accord with each individual's natural aptitudes. Thus is secured the highest possible coefficient of personal efficiency, and as a result the chances of success are considerably increased.

To a certain extent this holds also true in the business of salvation, in as much as some are called to serve God amid the turmoil of worldly occupations and others in the quiet of the cloister; yet in all this, specialization is more apparent than real. For in one way or another every one must attend to the entire business, although in a manner that is peculiar to his own calling. There is, however, in this variety of common interest something that is distinctively fundamental, and which for that reason may be considered as a specialty. This is the religious aspect of human lives as emphasized by the teaching and example of our Blessed Sav-

iour. If Christ is our model in all things, as He most assuredly is, He is more especially so in the matter of religion, as a brief consideration will readily show.

No other trait of Christ's beautiful character stands out so prominently as His profoundly religious respect for God and the law of God. As St. Paul so well reminds us, at His very entrance into the world He made a morning offering of Himself to His heavenly Father, and His whole subsequent life was but a fulfillment of that oblation. The accomplishment of His Father's will was the motive of all His actions. "Then said I: Behold, I come to do Thy will, O God." For this He prayed, for this He labored, for this He suffered. It was this that made Him subject to Mary and Joseph; it was this that led Him to the Temple at the age of twelve and induced Him to remain there unknown to His parents; it was this that kept Him at His lowly toil for eighteen long years in the carpenter shop at Nazareth; it was this that called Him to the Jordan to be baptized by His precursor, and then conducted Him into the desert there to fast and pray for forty days and forty nights; it was this, in fine, that caused Him so often during His public life to withdraw into the mountains alone to pray, and that made Him breathe forth His soul with the childlike prayer

upon His lips: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." How truly, indeed, He could say of Himself: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me"! Those touching words which He uttered during His agony in the garden, "Not my will but thine be done," were but the echo of a life spent in the most absolute religious subjection, which was fitly crowned by a real immolation of Himself on the blood-stained altar of the Cross.

And what Christ thus practiced in His own life, that He demands also of His followers along whatever lines they may be called to work out their soul's salvation. Their exterior occupations may be many and various, but the interior spirit that must guide them in all their ways is ever one and the same, and this, in its last analysis, is the spirit of religion. This Christ insisted on in season and out of season; this He made the keynote of all His teaching. It was this He emphasized in those solemn words: "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect; be ye holy as I am holy; seek ye first the kingdom of God and his justice; what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?" When He began "to do and to teach," as the Evangelist so pithily describes the opening of His public career, His one aim was to inculcate the absolute necessity of re-

ligious submission of the creature to the Creator, and this aim stands out prominently in all He did and taught.

It has been well said that Christ created the world anew to His own image and likeness and so regenerated it, and it can equally well be said that only in so far as individuals and society continue to reflect this image of the God-Man in their religious beliefs and practices is there any possibility of preserving the result of that regeneration. Every departure from the doctrines which He taught, every yielding of the religious principles which He laid down, means retrogression, means a return to pagan ideals and to pagan disorders. It required the incarnation of a God to lift the world from the depths of corruption to which it had sunk in pagan times, and nothing but the union of the Incarnate God with the souls of men through a life of practical faith can preserve it from a return to the same.

Hence it is quite evident that the religion which Christ inculcated, and which must form an essential part of our lives, is not religion in the abstract but in the concrete; it is not merely theoretical but eminently practical. It must dominate our minds, fill our hearts, and appear outwardly in our daily actions. It was this the Apostle had in mind when he said: "The just man liveth by faith." To

believe the truths of religion is indeed necessary, for where that belief is wanting there is no Christianity at all; but this belief alone does not suffice. To reduce faith to practice by a religious observance of the sabbath day is also necessary, but neither is this sufficient. The religion that remains shut up within the four walls of the church, or that does not venture abroad except in Sunday clothes, is not the religion of Christ, nor is it the religion that will answer the needs of the human heart. What men need is a religion that is not ashamed to walk about in a workday garb; a religion that has its shrine of worship in the home, in the office, in the factory, or anywhere else where men and women are called upon to choose between good and evil. And such a religion Christ has established for all men, bidding them to seek in all things first the kingdom of God and His justice. Only where this divine injunction is faithfully complied with does the religion of Christ flourish; there only do men and women approach the ideal placed before them in the life of their Model.

One of the most fatal delusions of our day is precisely this, that men and women somehow have convinced themselves that they can lead double lives; that they can safely devote six days of the week to the service of the world and of themselves and then give the one remaining day, or perhaps

only a part of it, to the service of God. They try the impossible of serving both God and Mammon, a folly which Christ our Saviour condemned in the most scathing terms when He said: "No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and Mammon." Time was given us for the service of God, and God will brook no rival. You may tell me that you must labor and toil for your support and for the support of those who are dependent on your efforts, but you can surely not plead that necessity as an excuse to justify any divergence from the clearly expressed law of Christ. He was fully aware of that necessity, and His promise, "all these things shall be added unto you," presupposes your honest efforts at self-support; nevertheless the service of God is to be your all in all, because it must inspire and direct and ennoble even the most worldly of your occupations. If your religion is not a mere sham, not a mere pretence, it must have power to make every one of your actions count for eternity, and in this consists the service of God as distinct from formal worship. It is this that must serve you as a criterion whereby you may know whether your religion is the religion of Christ or simply your own invention.

Suppose you apply this test to your daily conduct, what manner of religion would yours prove to be by the logic of your deeds? Take just one day and view it in the light of your own conscience. Did you begin that day with prayer, offering to God your joys and your sorrows, your actions and your sufferings, as faith teaches that you should do? Did you keep your hearts pure and unstained as becomes the children of God? Was your conversation such that you need not have been put to the blush had God been visibly present, as you certainly know by faith that He is always present although unseen of your bodily eyes? Did you bear your sufferings and disappointments patiently, because thus you must take up your cross daily and follow Christ? Were your business transactions marked by that fairness and justice which are demanded by your belief in a most just God, with whom there is no respect of persons? Did you by your kindness and forbearance endeavor to bring happiness to your family circle, knowing as you do that your first care must be for those of your own house? Have you been a help to all and a hindrance to none in the service of God, as is required of you by the religion which you profess? If you cannot answer these questions in the affirmative, you have by just so much

swerved from the right path and lived in contradiction to the faith that is in you. You may be Christians in theory, but you have not made good your title in practice. You may admire Christ, but you did not follow Him.

CHARACTER

"That the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work." II Tim. III, 17.

Closely connected with the religious influence which Christ wishes to exert upon the daily lives of His followers, and, in fact, a necessary consequence of the same, is the building up of character in the men and women to whom He proposes Himself as a model of Christian virtue. If there be truth in the old saying that every true Christian is by that very fact another Christ, then it must necessarily evidence itself along the lines of character. Then the person who has a rightful claim to the honored name of Christian must in his thoughts and aspirations, in his love and in his hatred, in his words and in his deeds, reflect that soundness of judgment and that rectitude of will which made the character of Christ at once the most beautiful and the most dominating that was ever found among the sons of men. For he only can be called another Christ, who has the character of Christ and manifests that character in the doing of his life-work.

Here, of course, the question immediately sug-

gests itself, what is the precise meaning of character? What must we acquire or eliminate in order to make our character like that of Christ? Well, to that question a variety of answers might be given, but perhaps the simplest, and for that matter the truest also, is this: Character is simply the way we have accustomed ourselves to look at things and to do things. Or, if you will, it is the sum total of the habits we have acquired. If we have accustomed ourselves to look for truth in all things and then act up to it, to do always what is right and noble, to be actuated by high and generous motives, we have acquired a beautiful and noble character; but if we have formed the habit of looking for subterfuges in our judgments, of doing what is mean and low, of acting from selfish and interested motives, we have acquired an ugly and low character. Our character, therefore, is precisely such as we have made it; it is something that we have acquired, not something with which we were born. We may indeed have inherited certain predispositions to good or evil, but the development of these predispositions is our own work, and this development considered in its final term is that intangible something which we call character.

Hence when I say that we as Christians must model our character upon that of Christ, I mean that we must accustom ourselves to judge of things

as Christ judged of them, to do things that Christ would do were He placed in our position. Thus we know that Christ valued the things of time only as they appeared in the light of eternity, and to this must we accustom ourselves in the ordering of our lives; we know that Christ was meek and patient and humble, and so must we endeavor to become in spite of our inclinations to the contrary; we know that Christ was pure and honest and charitable, and to this must our efforts be directed in all our daily struggles. As St. Paul so strongly expresses it, we must put off the old man, who is corrupted according to the desires of error, and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth, so that it be now no longer we who live, but Christ liveth in us.

This, you will say, is putting the matter in too general a way to make it productive of practical results. What is it that I individually must be intent upon day after day, so as to render my character more Christlike? Well, if you will tell me what you are, I will tell you what you must do. In this matter there is need of a correct diagnosis, which each individual can only make for himself. If you haven't the character you should have, it is first of all for you to find out what is amiss. When a certain Greek philosopher was asked for a definition of true wisdom, he answered:

"Know thyself," and a better answer has not yet been found. The trouble with most people is that they know too much about their neighbors and too little about themselves. Their own heart is an enigma to them which they do not even desire to understand. And yet it is this self-knowledge that forms the first step in the improvement of character. Without such knowledge even the best intentioned efforts must prove ineffective.

Hence if you ask me to tell you in a practical way what you must be intent upon in trying to make your character Christlike, I answer: Begin by taking a good look at yourselves; try to find out how ugly you are in your mental and moral make-up; see what there is in your disposition and in your way of acting that you would dislike in your neighbor; call to mind what you are oftenest reproached with by well-meaning friends, or better still by outspoken enemies. If you have the courage to take note of all this and to give it due consideration, you are on the way of forming a true estimate of your many shortcomings. Next array yourselves in this variegated garb of mental and moral defects and take your stand before your Blessed Saviour as you know Him from the teaching of your holy faith. Make an honest comparison between your life and His life, and then try to realize in what your copy differs from the Original.

See where the lines must be changed, the lights intensified, the shadows deepened. This will not only show you what you are not, but also what you ought to be; it gives you the starting point of a new life.

Much of this precious self-knowledge may be gathered from our ordinary examination of conscience, provided we go about it in a reasonable way. We have all been taught to examine our conscience at the close of each day, so as to set our house in order for the coming of the Lord. With most of us, I am afraid, this exercise amounts to little more than a superficial cataloguing of our daily faults, followed by a hurried act of contrition; yet it should be much more. When we find ourselves guilty of certain failings, especially if they be of frequent occurrence, we should try to discover the reason why we failed as we did. The failing itself is but the outward manifestation of an evil that lies deeper; it is the deadly fruit of some noxious growth in our character, and it is this that we must endeavor to trace up in all its various ramifications. If we will take the trouble to do this, at least from time to time, we must necessarily grow in self-knowledge and thus prepare the way for the important work of improving our character.

Of course, we must not rest satisfied here. From knowledge we must proceed to action. A careful

examination into our way of acting, and into the motives that prompt us to act as we do, reveals the rather unpleasant fact that our will is dominated by a set of unruly passions, which in one way or another cause all the mischief. Some have allowed themselves to become possessed by the spirit of pride, which makes them selfish, uncharitable, untruthful, dishonest. They will hold the first place at any cost, and to effect this they do not hesitate to tear their neighbor's reputation to shreds or to defraud him of his possessions. Others have become the slaves of sensuality, which causes them to be neglectful of their duty, intemperate, impure. They are determined to gratify their groveling desires cost what may, and in consequence they sacrifice the happiness of their families, the rights of their neighbor, and their own honor. It is the repression and uprooting of these unruly passions that forms the next step in the work of character building. In this we must reduce our knowledge to act, and resolutely follow the example of Christ. He had a beautiful and noble character, because He had a perfect control over all the inclinations of His human heart. Radically these inclinations were the same in Him as they are in us, but they were held in such absolute check that they could never stir except at the dictate of His own free will. It is true, we can never

gain so absolute a mastery over our passions as He possessed over His human inclinations; but we can make that mastery more perfect every day of our lives, and this He requires of us as His followers.

How is this to be done? By the use of two means which Christ Himself has pointed out to us both by word and example, and these two means are prayer and self-denial. Neither of them will prove effective if used by itself and to the exclusion of the other; but if they are employed simultaneously and consistently, there is no passion, however strong it may have become by constant indulgence, that will not yield in the end and give place to the opposite virtue. Is any one possessed of the spirit of pride, let him pray daily for strength to overcome himself, let him frequently and devoutly receive the sacraments for the same purpose, and then when the occasion offers, as it will time and again in the course of the day, let him resolutely go against the promptings of that foolish passion by honestly owning up to his faults, by generously forgiving offences, by being kind and charitable to those whom he dislikes. Is any one the slave of sensuality, let him proceed in the same way, praying earnestly and denying himself courageously, and with God's help he will soon rule as master where he formerly was driven as a slave.

It is, if you will, a somewhat disagreeable task, especially in the beginning; but it is effective, and the happy result more than makes up for all the trouble. For that result is nothing less than a perfect Christian character, which makes us worthy followers of Him who was the most beautiful of all the sons of men.

STRESS AND STRAIN

"With Christ I am nailed to the cross." GAL. II, 19.

Christ is not only our model, but our crucified model. He goes before us with a heavy cross upon His shoulders, and what is more, He tells us that we cannot follow Him except we also carry a cross upon our shoulders. "If any one will come after me," He says, "let him take up his cross daily, and follow me." This feature of the imitation of Christ has, I am afraid, a somewhat chilling effect upon most of us. We love Christ, we admire Him, and we would gladly resemble Him; but to suffer, to be crucified, to die,— that is another matter. To pay such a price for the happiness, however great it may be, of making Christ live in us calls for a generosity which many of us do not possess. We all would like to reign with Him in glory, but few there are who are willing to die with Him on the cross. And yet there is no crown without a cross; there is no rest without previous labor; there is no joy without antecedent sorrow. No truer words were ever spoken than those which our Blessed Saviour addressed to His disciples on their

way to Emmaus: "Ought not Christ to have suffered all these things, and so to enter into his glory?" And no truer inference has ever been drawn from these same words than this: "Ought not we to suffer as Christ did, and so to enter into our glory?" We are all on our way to heaven; and the way to heaven lies across the hill of crucifixion.

There is, however, another way of looking at this matter, which, if rightly understood, will cause us to embrace with joy and gratitude the heavy cross presented us by our suffering Saviour. In this world of sin and sorrows, we must take our share of human sufferings whatever path we may choose to follow. Sufferings are common to the sinner and the saint. Athwart every path of life is flung the shadow of the cross. Here on earth every rose has its thorns, and every cup of joy its drop of gall. Old and young, high and low, rich and poor, feel the stings of inevitable sorrow. It finds an entrance into the king's palace no less than into the laborer's cottage. As the poet so tersely expresses it: "Man was born to weep." It is not, therefore, escape from sufferings that must be our aim, but the secret of changing these inevitable sufferings into a source of joy, and this secret we may learn by following steadfastly the suffering Christ.

And here we must first of all remember that this universal law of human suffering formed originally no part of the Creator's plans; it was occasioned by man himself, who forswore his allegiance to his God and thereby undid the work of his Creator. He had been made God's own child, but he would not yield a child's obedience. Like the Prodigal of whom the Gospel speaks, he left his Father's house, went into the distant land of sin, and there lived riotously until misery and want made him a keeper of swine. This is life's saddest blight:—not the mere fact of suffering, but man's responsibility for the same. It weighed upon the race like the curse of an angry God, and none but God Himself could change that curse into a blessing. This change was wrought by the crucified Christ, who blotted out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, and through the wood of His cross sweetened the bitterness of all our sufferings. He poured the sunshine of joy over every tear of sorrow, and breathed the consolation of hope into every sigh of anguish. He did not take away our sorrows and our sufferings as He might have done, but He did something far better by changing them into a source of blessings. Experiencing as He did in His own life the crushing weight of human sorrows, He nevertheless did not hesitate to say: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be

comforted. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice's sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The law of human sufferings still applies to all, but those who follow Christ can count all their sufferings joy; because if they suffer with Christ, then they shall also be glorified with Christ.

Nor is it merely as harbingers of future glory that these sufferings are a source of blessing to Christ's faithful followers on earth. There is another fact that differentiates the sufferings of God's faithful servants from those that fall to the lot of the sinner; they carry with them the promise of divine assistance, which the sinner has no right to expect whilst he follows his evil ways. "When I am weak," says the Apostle, "then I am strong"; because the weakness of man is sustained by the strength of God. Our crosses are at times very heavy, but God's help is always great in proportion. Christ our Model does not bid us simply to take up our cross daily, but to take it up and follow Him. He goes before us, not merely pointing the way, but compassionately allowing our crosses to lean upon His own wounded shoulders. It was the realization of this important truth that made the Apostle say so confidently: "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." It is the practical experience of this same truth that gives peace of heart and joy of spirit, even in the midst

of our intensest sufferings. The more sorely we are afflicted, the more closely we draw to the cross-laden Christ; and the more forsaken we may seem to be, the more abundant is the divine virtue that flows in upon us from His wounded heart.

It may indeed well be that God sends us sufferings because of our own personal sins; it may well be that these sufferings are a real punishment inflicted by an infinitely just God; yet even in this case they carry with them their own blessing, if only we will draw near to our suffering Saviour. For if we are still in sin, they will lead us back to the path of virtue; or if we have already repented of our past misdeeds, they enable us to render here on earth the satisfaction which would otherwise have been demanded of us after death. Nay, not only this, but if we bear them patiently, as with God's grace we always can, they will add to our future reward a sweetness and joy that could not have sprung from any other source. Well, therefore, may we count all our sufferings joy, because they are our share in the cross of Christ. Well may we say that when the hand of the Lord touches us, it is always filled with blessings — blessings which we shall appreciate at their true value only on that happy day, when our good Father in heaven will press us to His great heart of love, and whisper into our ears the consoling words: "Child, it was good

for you to suffer a little whilst on earth, that now you may be happpy with me forever in heaven."

What we must learn, therefore, from our divine Model, who in His own person walked the way of human sorrows, is first and foremost to view life's inevitable trials in their true relation to God, to ourselves, and to the life beyond the grave. It was an act of the tenderest mercy that God gave us a crucified Leader, who can teach us by word and example how to bear the cross to the hill of crucifixion. The way which He points out to us is indeed rough and narrow, but it has been hallowed by His own bleeding footsteps. He hangs before us torn and bruised on the tree of shame, but over that tree is shed the soft radiance of the open sepulchre. To-day the heavy cross is His portion, but to-morrow it will be followed by a crown. And as in His case so in ours; for if we suffer with Christ, with Christ also shall we rise in glory.

Our greatest need in this matter of suffering is the spirit of faith, which goes beyond the narrow horizon of time and gathers consolation and strength from the endless ages of eternity. To the unbeliever, indeed, the universal law of suffering is a riddle that sets all his philosophy at naught. He can but look upon it as a hard fact, that has its explanation, if it has one at all, in blind and cruel

fate, and his greatest heroism does not go beyond a stoical submission to that fate. That these sufferings may be made a source of peace and joyous hope, he neither understands nor believes. To him the trials of life are an unmixed evil — an evil that finds no compensation in future happiness. Hence when escape from them becomes impossible, they bury him in the dismal depths of hopeless despair. To the believing Christian, on the other hand, who has learned to live by faith, life's many sorrows can never become the source of lasting discouragement and real unhappiness. He understands the nature and purpose of human afflictions as no one else can, and in that understanding he finds his strength and comfort. Be his sufferings what they may, he knows that they were shared in by God's own Son, whose wounded hands will uphold him in his greatest sorrows.

It is this point especially that we must always keep in mind, if we would bear life's trials and afflictions in the proper spirit. Our sufferings are not imaginary; no, they are real, very real; they are a heavy cross: yet the moment we realize that this cross rests upon our Saviour's own wounded shoulders, we feel only half its weight. Sickness and poverty and disappointment may hang like a heavy black pall over our lives, yet through the darkness

of them all shines the soft radiance of our crucified Saviour's compassionate love, not only filling our aching hearts with peace, but even giving us a foretaste of heaven's sweetest joy — the joy of victory.

OBSTACLES

"If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." GAL. I, 10.

To a Christian nothing can seem more reasonable than to follow Christ in all things, whether honor be the immediate result or dishonor, joy or sorrow, success or failure; for as Christ is to him a divine leader, he has the fullest assurance that in following His guidance he shall infallibly secure his own greater good. Unfortunately, however, what appears so reasonable in theory is not rarely set aside as inexpedient in practice. Even the pagan poet recognized this unhappy inconsistency of men's judgments and actions, when he wrote of himself:

> "I clearly see the better course,
> And give it my approval;
> Yet do I oft what seemeth worse,
> And stain my soul with evil."

And St. Paul bears witness to the same inconsistency in almost identical words: "I am delighted," he says, "with the law of God according to the inward man; but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my mem-

bers. . . For I do not that which I will; but the evil which I hate, that I do." Of course, in his case the discrepancy between judgment and action was involuntary, and therefore sin had no part in it; but with most of us the will itself is in conflict with the law of reason, and as a result we "stain our souls with evil."

Here the question arises, what is it that causes us so often to act against our better judgment? What is it that places our lives in such glaring contradiction with our faith? No doubt, you will say, the whole difficulty results from our unruly passions. Under particularly difficult circumstances they usurp the place of reason, obscure the teaching of faith, and the result is a series of actions of which even the pagan poet would have cause to feel ashamed. In a general way, this is undoubtedly true; yet I believe in the majority of instances a somewhat more particular cause might be assigned, which, although it is a particular cause, is nevertheless quite general in its occurrence.

Has it ever struck you how very many people are, in one way or another, influenced by human respect? How very many fail to live up to their ideals because they are afraid to act differently from their associates? This may seem strange, yet any observant person knows that it is quite generally the case. Chameleon-like, our minds and hearts take

their color from our surroundings, and that borrowed color shows itself in our words and actions. If we are thrown in with honest men, we are honest; because that alone will meet with the approval of our associates. If unfortunately we are made to associate with thieves, we are apt to become thieves ourselves; because if we do not, they will laugh us out of countenance for our scruples in following the "rules of the game." If we live in a religious-minded community, where it is an established custom to give to God the things that are God's, we comply with the demands of religion; because if we fail to do so, we lose caste with our fellows. If we happen to be surrounded with men and women of worldly lives, who neglect their religious obligations, it will not be long before we follow their example; because any other way of acting would make us the butt of their jokes and the object of their sneers. With the pure, we are pure; with the vile, we become vile; with angels, we may develop into something angelic; but with devils, we are almost sure to become devils ourselves,— and all because of human respect; all because we cannot bear to have pointed at us the finger of scorn. It is true, there are exceptions to this rule; but they are only exceptions.

Do you wish to have an example of what human respect will do? Look at Pilate condemning the

Son of God to death. He was in many respects a good man. He was upright, honest, clear-sighted, as His efforts to free our innocent Saviour abundantly show; yet he had one weakness, he feared the adverse criticism of men. At three different times he judicially proclaimed the innocence of Christ, and then basely condemned Him to the scourging at the pillar and to the death of the cross. Why? Because "if thou release this man, thou art no friend of Cæsar." He feared the ill will of Cæsar, and so an innocent man, whom he suspected to be more than man, must suffer and die. That's what human respect will do: — to avoid the frown of a friend, it will sacrifice the life of a God.

Jesus Christ is on trial before the world to-day: — He is always on trial before the consciences of men. He lives to-day in the doctrines which He taught, in the Church which He established, in the sacraments which He instituted, and through these He claims the faith of men's minds, the allegiance of men's hearts, the testimony of men's lives. Before the tribunal of reason His claim is found to be just, and men declare openly that they can find in them no cause of condemnation. Yet if they live up to Christ's doctrines, if they submit to Christ's Church, if they receive Christ's sacraments, they are "not Cæsar's friends." This decides the issue. Like Pilate of old, they wash their hands and de-

clare that they are innocent of the rejection of this just man. They cannot do without the friendship of Cæsar, and therefore they are forced to give up Christ.

Nor is this miserable cowardice, which brands the stamp of basest slavery upon free-born men and women, limited to the religious world; it is on exhibition in every order and station of human society. It blights the lives of individuals and of society all the world over. The corrupt politician, the votary of pleasure, the slave of the poisoned cup, no less than the religious backslider, in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred date the beginning of their moral ruin from concessions to human respect. Many enter politics with the best of intentions, honest and disinterested, but very few can show a clean record when the time comes to lay down the burden of their office. Why? Because their honest scruples were laughed at, they were called "innocents," or perhaps they were accused of "playing to the grandstand." For a time they boldly faced this fusillade of jeers and gibes, but when it became a question of "either follow the game or get out," they soon fell into line and thus gave up their God in order to retain the friendship of Cæsar. It is the same story in social life, with all its indecencies and practical applications of unchristian views. In their heart of hearts men

and women feel that the demands of God's law are absolute; they know that Christian morality admits of no compromise with pagan indulgence: yet a haunting dread of losing their social caste is quite sufficient to make them override the dictate of their conscience. They would gladly save the innocent Christ, but if this cannot be done except at the risk of losing Cæsar's friendship, then Christ must die.

Again, what victims are sacrificed upon the altar of human respect in the lives of individuals, as independent of their social relations, God alone knows. How many a drunkard, whose beastly indulgence has long since changed his home into a hell, is not forced to trace back his downfall to the foolish fear of ridicule? He fell in with dissolute companions, they taunted him with his squeamishness, they dared him to another and another sip of the poisoned cup, and so he must needs "prove himself a man." How many roses has not this same human respect plucked from the cheek of innocence? How many pure hearts has it not dragged into the mire of lust? Free-born men and women are too cowardly to say "no," when their conscience demands it, and the result is ruin. Like Pilate of old, they make concession after concession until their ruin is accomplished.

And these things happen among Christians? among the professed followers of Him, who, when

He had honor set before Him, chose the cross, despising the shame? What right have they to bear His name? In what do they copy His example? He was not ashamed to be born in a stable, to work at the carpenter's trade, to take His place among sinners, to be publicly exhibited as a fool, although in all this He was under no obligation save such only as arose from His love of us; and they cannot bear the frown of a friend or the sneer of an enemy when their very allegiance to God is at stake? Where is the family likeness that must needs subsist between the disciple and his Master, between the child and its Father? It would be blasphemy to call them other Christs, and yet such is the purpose of their calling. How well indeed the Apostle said: "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ"; for the cause of Christ is in eternal opposition to the ways of men.

IV

BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS

READY CASH

"Our sufficiency is from God." II Cor. III, 3.

Besides the capital that is invested in an undertaking, there must always be at the business man's disposal a certain amount of ready cash, which may be used to meet current expenses. If such cash be wanting the business is apt to suffer, either because the necessary improvements cannot be made or because some fine opportunity of closing a profitable deal is irretrievably lost. Hence business men are usually very careful to have at their command a considerable sum of money for such purposes.

In its own proper sense this may be applied to the supernatural order. In our spiritual lives minor damages are of almost daily occurrence, and there is practically an uninterrupted series of fine opportunities for making profits. The required cash is, of course, of a spiritual kind and can therefore not be locked up in a safe. It must be supplied as it is needed, and its abundant supply depends largely upon our own efforts. In more familiar terms it is called actual grace, without which we cannot perform a single meritorious action. Sanctifying

grace places us indeed in the supernatural state, and the infused virtues of faith, hope and charity dispose us in a manner for supernatural actions, yet over and above all this we need God's helping grace in order to perform actions that are deserving of an eternal reward. Something analogous to this occurs even in the natural order, as, for instance, with regard to the sense of sight. No matter in how healthy a condition our eyes may be, and no matter either by how many material objects we may be surrounded, unless there be at the same time some kind of light we can see nothing. In a certain sense, therefore, we may say that actual grace is to the soul what light is to the eyes; both are absolutely necessary in their own proper order.

There are two special means placed at our disposal for the obtaining of this grace, namely, the proper use of the sacraments and prayer. Aside from the use of these two means we can do very little that is of any practical value in this respect. It is true indeed that faithful coöperation with one grace gives us a certain right to others which we may need, but only on the supposition that we make a proper use of the means of grace provided for us by the good God can this prove effective in its final results. Hence it is very true to say that for the obtaining of an abundant supply of actual grace, and consequently for the successful working out

of our salvation, we depend almost entirely on the sacraments and on prayer. They give us free access to God's own treasury and without them no access to that treasury can be obtained.

First, then, as regards the sacraments we must ever bear in mind that they were instituted by Christ not merely for the purpose of giving or increasing sanctifying grace, but also to be active means of salvation by conferring upon us a right and title to God's special help and providence. Thus Baptism, besides cleansing our souls from sin and adorning them with the precious gift of God's grace, likewise bestows upon us all the prerogatives of divine sonship, to be enjoyed even in this land of exile. Through the reception of this sacrament we are admitted into God's own family circle, and in consequence God becomes truly our Father and as such He helps us in the work of our salvation in the same way as our earthly fathers are supposed to help us in securing our temporal welfare. He watches over us in our temptations, encourages us in the practice of virtue, and bears us up in all our trials. He enlightens our mind and strengthens our will, so that we may be able to lead truly Christian lives. So again in Confirmation, which makes us true soldiers of Christ, we receive besides an increase of sanctifying grace a right to God's special help in the case of extraordinary difficulties that

may endanger our salvation during the course of our lives. Hence a person who has been confirmed is by that very fact entitled to more abundant helps than one who has neglected to receive this sacrament. Similarly in regard to all the other sacraments of the Church; each single one of them is a source of special help, which makes the work of our salvation both more easy and secure.

As is quite evident from the nature of the case, the two sacraments that deserve a more particular consideration in this respect are Penance and the Holy Eucharist. Both can be received again and again, and in consequence both are most intimately connected with the great work of saving our souls. Yet the manner in which they help us in this work is often but little understood by the faithful, and that even by persons who take the salvation of their souls quite seriously. Nay, some there are who look upon the reception of these sacraments as a painful ordeal to which they must submit, and not at all as a favor for which they can never be sufficiently thankful. Yet a favor it undoubtedly is, as a brief explanation will readily show.

Thus Penance was indeed instituted for the forgiveness of sin, and for this reason heartfelt sorrow and sincere confession are essentially necessary for its proper reception; but the forgiveness of sin is not its only object. Nay, if this were the only ob-

ject to be attained, I doubt very much whether Christ would have instituted the sacrament of Penance at all. Had He so willed it, forgiveness of sin might have been obtained through an act of perfect contrition without any reference to sacramental absolution. But what He furthermore intended to secure for us through this sacrament was the help which it affords for avoiding sin in future. And this help does not consist merely in the advice and exhortation of the confessor, although they too have their value; it is inherent in the sacrament itself. The very fact that the penitent contritely confesses his sins and then receives sacramental absolution induces God to give him a very special assistance when temptations to the same sins occur again after confession. The sacrament is in a true sense supernatural medicine, which is not only curative but also preventive.

This may perhaps become somewhat clearer if we take a particular case. Thus, for instance, when the sin of detraction is confessed and forgiven, in the next temptation to the same sin God will enlighten that penitent's mind so that he may see more clearly the evil of the sin to which he is tempted, and He will strengthen the penitent's will so that he may more easily turn away from the temptation. It is true, the penitent may refuse to coöperate with these graces; he may without necessity expose him-

self to the temptation, and thus fall again into the same sin: but if this happens, it is not want of strength that brings about his fall; it is lack of good will and disregard of common sense precaution. And so with every sin to which a person may be strongly tempted. If frequent and proper use is made of the sacrament of Penance, even the strongest temptation may be overcome and the most inveterate evil habit may be eradicated. And this, aside from the forgiveness of sin, is the real object of the sacrament of Penance.

Very much the same is aimed at in the reception of the Holy Eucharist, but from a different point of view. Penance restores the spiritual life that was either lost or weakened by sin and then gives strength to preserve it; the Holy Eucharist invigorates the spiritual life of the soul and renders it fruitful of good works. This sacrament is in a true sense spiritual food and drink, and therefore it does for the soul in the supernatural order what material food and drink do for the body in the natural order. It sustains, nourishes and augments the soul's supernatural life. In the order of nature it is a matter of daily experience that when a person has a good appetite and takes sufficient wholesome nourishment, he becomes proportionately strong and active and in consequence is enabled to offer an effective resistance to bodily diseases and to un-

dergo great labor and fatigue without injury to his health. Similarly in the order of grace, when a person frequently receives Holy Communion he becomes spiritually strong, easily resists temptations and with great readiness practices every Christian virtue, as is expected of one who lives in union with Christ. It is this increase of spiritual vigor and religious fervor that constitue the end for which the Holy Eucharist was instituted by Christ.

In this connection it must, however, be noted, that although the sacraments produce these special effects in virtue of their divine institution, nevertheless in practice very much depends on the manner in which they are received. As the Council of Trent expressly teaches, the measure of grace imparted is always in proportion to the disposition of the recipient, and therefore one who prepares himself carefully for the reception of these sacraments obtains more grace and more abundant helps than another who makes little or no preparation. Hence it may well happen that a person approaches the sacraments quite frequently and yet advances very little in holiness of life, because he makes no effort to prepare himself in a becoming manner. He goes to confession without paying much attention to heartfelt sorrow for sins, receives Holy Communion without endeavoring to excite himself to devotion, and although he may be sufficiently pre-

pared to avoid committing a sacrilege, he is in no disposition to receive the full measure of grace intended by Christ. Hence approach the sacraments often, but only after a diligent preparation.

SUBSIDIES

"Ask, and it shall be given you." MATTH. VII, 7.

It not rarely happens that business men run short of cash and yet cannot do without it except by incurring serious losses to their interests. Under such circumstances they are compelled to make loans, which, however, is not rarely a doubtful expedient and may in the end lead to serious complications. If the business in question be of national importance, it may happen that the government will obviate the necessity of such loans by granting a subsidy, which in intention and in effect is not a loan but a free gift.

A somewhat similar deficit of ready cash occurs quite frequently in the business of salvation. By a repeated and worthy reception of the sacraments we have indeed placed at our disposal an immense amount of actual grace, which of itself would be quite sufficient to meet the many demands made on us in the course of our daily lives; yet for our own greater spiritual profit God has so ordered the bestowal of these graces that we find frequent occasion of applying to Him for extra help. This extra

help we can always obtain, not by way of a loan but rather as a subsidy, which, although primarily granted for our own personal advantage, nevertheless in its effects conduces also to the common good. It consists in the graces which we secure by fervent prayer. Hence prayer must needs play an important part in the economy of our salvation.

Taking prayer in its widest sense, it is absolutely certain that no one, who has arrived at the age of reason, can ever hope to be saved without it. For in this sense prayer is synonymous with the worship of God, and surely no one is so foolish as to look for salvation in heaven if he does not worship God on earth. This would be the height of folly. The way to heaven may indeed skirt the market place, but it must lead through the church. Whoever neglects to hear Mass on Sundays, or fails to receive the sacraments at stated times, may consecrate all his thoughts and words and deeds to God, yet it will avail him nothing in the end. God Himself has ordained what manner of worship we must render Him, and if we fail to keep His ordinances in this respect, all else must needs be waste of energy and loss of time. Hence as far as prayer is identical with the prescribed worship of God, its necessity is so evident that it would be stultifying one's common sense to insist on proving

it to any one. Only the wilfully blind can fail to see it.

But even if we take prayer in a stricter sense, as it stands for and signifies the raising of one's mind and heart to God as the object of our hope and love, it is a matter of the utmost importance. In the first place, if the day is not begun with prayer it is not likely to count much for eternity; and yet the work of our salvation is to be carried on not merely on Sundays and holy days of obligation, but also on work days whilst we are engaged in temporal pursuits. To work is indeed very commendable, for it is in keeping with the divine law to eat our bread in the sweat of our brow; but unless this work be sanctified by a supernatural motive its real and essential value is lost. Hence the necessity of offering each new day with all its joys and sufferings, its crosses and its blessings, to God through prayer as soon as we arise from sleep. This is of the greatest interest to our soul's eternal welfare and must therefore necessarily be regarded by every sensible man and woman as a matter of the very highest importance. We never fail to consult the interests of our bodies by taking a good breakfast before we go to work, why not also consult the interests of our immortal souls by taking a spiritual refection before burdening them with the day's sor-

did cares? In fact this is of much greater importance, and if it had to be a question of omitting either the one or the other, breakfast should be dispensed with rather than morning prayer. Of course, in practice this necessity can never arise since even a short prayer will do; but it shows us the importance of a matter that is quite commonly looked upon as of no consequence.

And as morning prayer should thus like a heavenly benediction descend upon our daily work, so should that work itself at times be interrupted by thoughts of our good Father who is in heaven. Is it reasonable to be so completely immersed in our work and worldly schemes as never to think of the home whither we are hastening with each passing minute? Is it reasonable to call ourselves God's own children and then allow a whole day to pass without greeting Him as our Father? Does your mind never revert to the earthly homes which you left in the morning to be about your daily task? Do you never give a thought to the loved ones who busy themselves to make that home pleasant for you by your return at night? They must be strange homes indeed if they admit of such complete forgetfulness. Yet what is the best of earthly homes as compared to the one which our thoughtful and loving Father is preparing for us in heaven? We are not a moment out of His mind either by day

or by night, as we all know full well, and yet we can spend the livelong day without a thought of Him? Strange children we must be indeed!

Nor is this prayerful remembrance of our good Father in heaven merely a matter of common propriety; it not rarely becomes an urgent necessity if we wish to avoid falling into sin. Temptations may come upon us at any time, in any place, under any circumstances, and they are usually not overcome without some short aspiration or prayer. We are safe only when we are enfolded in the arms of our heavenly Father; yet into His arms we cannot rush except when our souls rise on the wings of prayer to His throne of mercy. The principal reason why we so often fall into sin is precisely neglect of prayer. Temptations come, God inspires us with the thought to pray, we neglect it, and sin is the result. And what a pity it is! One single aspiration might have been sufficient to save us from that miserable fall; it could have been made without the loss of a minute's time: but no, we were too lazy or too indifferent, and now the devil rejoices over our folly whilst the good God, who was so anxious to help us, turns away more in sorrow than in anger.

Perhaps you will say, where then does the help of the sacraments come in, if we must pray in order to overcome temptation? Do not they give us

strength to keep out of sin? Yes, they do. The very thought of prayer and the strength to act up to that thought was the effect of the sacraments, and if you had only once said: Father help me, you would have received additional strength. God makes prayer a necessity for us that He may keep us near Him; He wishes to dwell in our thoughts and to be enshrined in our hearts, and when we refuse Him that satisfaction He permits us to come to grief that we may learn wisdom from our own folly. Ask, says our Blessed Saviour, and you shall receive; knock and it shall be opened to you. He knows indeed all our needs without our telling Him; He is most anxious to help us even without our asking Him: but He also knows how much better it is for us that we should ask; for the asking itself is deserving of an eternal reward. Are not our own good parents always ready to help us in our needs? are they not anxious to give us some token of their love? Yet what would they think of us if we were never to ask them a favor? if we were never to crave their blessings? They would feel that the sweetest joy had gone out of their lives. So it is with God. He is our Father, we are His children, and he feels sorely hurt when we do not come to Him in childlike prayer. Ask, and it shall be given to you.

But there is another consideration which we must

never lose sight of in connection with prayer. It is the duty we all have of thanking God for His many blessings. Would you not consider it extremely bad form, nay absolute boorishness, if, whilst you conferred all sorts of favors on a person, he would receive them all without saying so much as thank you? Yet that is precisely our conduct in regard to God if we neglect our daily prayers. Not a single minute of the day passes but is marked by some token of His love, and we boorishly take it all without a word of thanks. Why, even the dumb beasts acknowledge in their own imperfect way the kindness of their master, and we God's favored children are unmindful of our Father's many blessings? It is enough to make us blush for very shame when we come to think of it; but the trouble usually is that we do not think. Oh, "think of the Lord in goodness, and seek him in simplicity of heart," so that "in all things you may give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you all."

A FULL DAY

"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God." I Cor. x, 31.

Perhaps the most striking feature about the modern business world is its strenuousness. Under present economic conditions business is business indeed, and there is no play about it. The leisurely ways of half a century ago are to-day looked upon as an unpardonable waste of time, a sin that means discharge to the employé and failure to the employer. The American shibboleth, "Time is money," has to-day a very practical meaning and its application is fast becoming world wide.

In its own proper way this condition of things finds its counterpart in the business of salvation, not only as it is to be carried on in these modern times, but as it was intended by God from the very beginning. To the business man time is money, to the child of God on earth time is eternity. Each single moment reaches in its effects beyond the grave for eternal weal or woe. In this particular line of business, vacation time has no existence; there is no travelling abroad for health or pleasure;

it means work, work, constant work, until the books are closed in death.

This seems discouraging, and yet if rightly understood it can only lend new interest to the work. For if there is need of constant application there is also the satisfaction of uninterrupted gain, whilst the very constancy of application acts as a stimulus to ever renewed effort. There is this important difference between the business of salvation and any other kind of business wherein man may employ his time and energy, that it utilizes for its purposes and makes productive of profitable returns not only the hours of active labor but also the time of rest and recreation; nay, even of sleep and joyous pastime. One can be usefully engaged in it in the market-place, in the banquet hall and in the ball room, as well as in the church, in the family circle and in the solitude of nature alone with God in prayer. It is the most catholic of all possible kinds of business as well as the most important. For "whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God," and to promote the glory of God is necessarily identical with due attention to the business of salvation.

Is this a poetic exaggeration? No, it is the prosaic truth, although there is nothing in all the realms of poetry that contains a thought half so sublime. If ever truth was stranger than fiction,

it would seem to be so in the present instance; and yet if we give a little thought to the matter, the strangeness of it all is found to be entirely in our subjective view of it and not in its objective reality. When God elevated human nature to the supernatural state, He did not destroy that nature but only raised it to a higher plane of being and of action. That elevation was neither an undoing nor a correction of His creative work; it was simply a perfecting of the same. Hence whatever action would have been reasonable in the merely natural state is now under the proper conditions meritorious of a supernatural reward. Human nature does not lend itself to continuous physical exertions; it calls for rest and sleep and the inspiration of pleasant dreams. The body needs food and drink as well as healthful exercise, and the soul must have her proper measure of innocent amusement no less than of serious thought and heartfelt prayer. All this is reasonable, and because it is reasonable hence the good God, who is the author both of nature and of grace, has made it all subservient to the working out of our soul's salvation.

If therefore we will only comply with the necessary conditions laid down by God Himself, we have it in our power to make every day of our lives a full business day, not a moment of which shall be lost for eternity. These conditions are two in

number, presupposing, of course, that we are in the state of sanctifying grace without which our actions have no direct value for heaven. The first of these conditions is that we do not employ our time and energies in what is opposed to the will of God as known to us through conscience. In this I do not refer to what is in itself sinful, for sinful actions can never be made meritorious; but I mean good actions done through selfish motives. Thus for instance, to be kind to the neighbor, to be helpful to the poor, to be temperate and industrious, is to act in perfect accord with the dictate of right reason and must therefore be acceptable to God; yet all this may be vitiated by the motives from which these actions spring. If one were, for example, to give large alms to the needy for the purpose of parading his philanthropy before the world, he would by that very fact blight the fairest act of corporal mercy and make of it an abomination before God. And so of every other good action of which self is the determining motive. However good it may be in itself, if it is done for a selfish end it loses all its value for heaven.

Against this self-seeking in our good works our Blessed Saviour warns us most forcibly in the Sermon on the Mount, when He says: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a re-

ward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when thou dost an alms-deed, sound not the trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Amen I say to you, they have their reward. But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth. That thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee." However this does not mean that we must always hide our good works from men, but only that we must not do them with the intention of gaining the applause of the world; for we owe it to others to give them a good example in all that appertains to a perfect Christian life. Hence our Blessed Saviour in the same Sermon on the Mount also says most explicitly: "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." We must bear witness to Christ in our virtuous deeds, but primarily that God may be glorified and not that we ourselves may be applauded.

The second condition is positive in its bearing upon our mental attitude and regards such actions as are in themselves neither good nor bad but indifferent, such as eating and drinking, innocent amusements, and in general all temporal occupations. If moderation be observed in them they

are in perfect accord with the dictate of right reason, and yet of themselves they bear no direct relation to a supernatural reward. Something must be infused into them that raises their merit to a higher plane, and this something is a supernatural motive. Their value for heaven depends entirely on this. If we eat and drink and amuse ourselves simply for the pleasure which it affords us, these actions are purely natural and the pleasure resulting therefrom is our only reward; but if we give God a share in these same actions by performing them in obedience to His holy will as known to us through faith, they rise above the merely natural order and entitle us to an eternal recompense. And so it is with all our daily actions, provided they are not evil in themselves; it is not so much their objective value that counts with God, but the intention with which they are performed. If that intention reaches out in some way to God's greater glory, it invests our every thought and word and deed with a supernatural merit which calls for an everlasting reward in heaven. It is in this sense that the Apostle says: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God." Surely, God has rendered it easy for us to make every day of our lives a full business day for eternity.

Were we to put this power of supernaturalizing

all our actions into daily practice, we would not only lay up for ourselves a great treasure in heaven but also find an interest in our work that would never fail. We sometimes complain of the monotony of our daily tasks, and if viewed from a merely natural standpoint that complaint may be very just; but were we to take a supernatural view of it all, as we really should, that monotony would quickly give way to the liveliest interest. Have you ever watched a gang of convicts breaking stones by the roadside? From morning till night they bend over their monotonous task; one stroke of the hammer is precisely as the other; there is no room for ambition, no call for enthusiasm. They are mere machines and before long the monotony of their never changing work becomes almost unendurable. Place alongside of these convicts an expert sculptor; give him a fine block of marble, and tell him to make thereof a beautiful statue which is to be handed down to posterity as his masterpiece. With what enthusiasm he begins his work! Mechanically he performs the same task as the convicts who labor at his side, yet how different the spirit and the interest with which he uses his tools. As the shapeless mass gradually assumes the proportions and symmetry of a living form, his very soul seems to pass into the cold stone and makes it glow with the warmth of his own life. Whence does this dif-

ferent spirit come? From the higher end which he has in view. So, too, may we be convicts or artists according to the motives that inspire our actions.

SPECULATIONS

"Let no temptation take hold on you, but such as is human." I Cor. x, 13.

Few things work greater havoc in the business world than ill-advised speculations. By far the greater number of the most disastrous failures must be traced to this source. Through it tens of thousands have lost their hard-earned savings, and it has filled many a suicide's untimely grave. Yet in spite of it all, the penchant for it never dies, even in those whose sad experience should have made them wiser men. There seems to be a fascination about it that is positively intoxicating, and like all intoxication it murders reason.

In a somewhat different sense, but with equally disastrous results, this adventurous disposition of the human mind manifests itself also in the spiritual order of things. There, too, the gambling propensities of our nature frequently lead us to invest our time and energy in occupations that seem to promise rich returns, yet in the accounting show invariably that we have played a losing game. This occurs whenever we have the foolhardiness to dillydally with temptations, and of such dilly-

dallying even the best of us have at times been made to pay the forfeits. No matter how firmly we may purpose with each returning day to promote our soul's interests in all we do, there is invariably thrown in our way some one object or another which appeals to this or that vicious inclination in our corrupt nature, and before we have time to realize what we are about we begin to speculate on the possibility of deriving some substantial advantage from listening to the appeal. There is indeed no doubt in our mind that the issue may in the end prove to be hopelessly disastrous, but the spell is upon us and unless we have accustomed ourselves to throw it off quickly, it will, as St. Paul so forcefully expresses it, captivate us in the law of sin, until all too late we realize the terrible fact that we have gambled away a treasure which no money can buy. It is very important, therefore, that we let no temptation take hold on us, but such as is human; that is, such as we are disposed to overcome and thus turn into spiritual gain.

In this matter of temptations we must first of all bear in mind that they do not come to us from God; for every temptation is an incitement to sin, and in this sense it is most certainly true that God "tempteth no man." It is not at all rare to hear the foolish question, even from well-meaning persons, why does God tempt me to this or that sin?

why does God make my life miserable by subjecting me to these horrible temptations? Were these good persons to understand the full import of such questions they would be guilty of blasphemy. God is infinitely holy and as such He cannot be a tempter of evil. He has indeed placed us in a world that is full of temptations, yet these temptations are not of His making: — they were born of sin, and sin is not the work of God but of man. Hence the Apostle so well says: "Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God. For God is not a tempter of evils, and he tempteth no man. But every man is tempted by his own concupiscences, being drawn away and allured." It is therefore to our own vitiated nature, not as made by God but as ruined by man, that temptations must ultimately be traced back. The various beings with which we come in contact, whether they be rational or irrational, animate or inanimate, as also the different trials that God allows to come upon us, may indeed and do supply the occasions when these evil propensities of our nature spring into action; but of themselves they have no power to incite us to sin and therefore they are temptations only because we make them such. In every instance "man is tempted by his own concupiscence," and concupiscence itself is the evil fruit that grew on the tree of sin.

Yet whilst temptations are thus the deadly issue of sin-stained nature, they may nevertheless become the occasion of the greatest of blessings, and thus God in His wisdom contrives to draw good out of evil. This is a point that is quite commonly overlooked and yet on its clear understanding largely depends our happiness in this life and our blessedness in the life to come. In this connection we ought always to bear in mind the words of St. James: "My brethren," he says, "count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations." And the reason of this joy is quite obvious. For every temptation is necessarily directed against some particular Christian virtue, and when we resist it, as with God's help we always can, that resistance itself is an act of virtue and as such entitles us to an eternal reward. Thus, for instance, when a person overcomes a temptation to pride, he by that very fact practices the virtue of humility; when he resists a temptation to lust, he practices the virtue of purity: and so in all other cases whatever be the virtue against which he is tempted. To resist temptations means more than to abstain from sinning; it implies a positive act of virtue which is recorded in the eternal account books of God. Hence it may well happen that the more a person is tempted the greater also will be his progress in Christian perfection, and it is not unlikely that on

the last great day of reckoning many of us will find that by far the greater part of our merit for heaven was gathered from this source. Whilst, therefore, temptations are an evil, they are not an unmixed evil, and for the good of which they may be the occasion the infinitely wise God may well allow them to harass for a while the children of His love.

From this it may perhaps appear that it would be advisable to expose one's self to temptations on all possible occasions, for by overcoming them one would be constantly gathering merit for heaven. Yes, by overcoming them; but would you overcome them? There's the rub. If you will take an honest look at your past, it is more than likely that you will find verified in your own lives the words of Holy Scripture: "He that loveth the danger shall perish in it." The trouble is that we carry two laws in our members; the law of the spirit and the law of the flesh, and whilst the spirit is willing the flesh is weak. Hence in this matter we must be guided by the counsel of St. Paul: "Let no temptation lay hold on you, but such as is human."

Perhaps this matter will become somewhat clearer if we distinguish between voluntary and involuntary temptations. This latter kind are such as arise necessarily from our surroundings, our

lawful associations, or legitimate employment. They come to us, therefore, without any doings of our own. We may indeed in some sense be the cause of these temptations, in as much as they arise from what we are voluntarily engaged in, yet as long as these occupations are reasonable we cannot be held responsible for the results, and so the temptations are really involuntary. Temptations of this kind we need never fear; they are such as are human. We have always sufficient strength to overcome them, and nothing further is required of us than recourse to God in a short aspiration and prompt action in turning away from them. Even if they occur frequently and are most persistent in their appeal to our passions, they need cause us no anxiety; for if we accustom ourselves, as we all may and should, to reject them promptly as soon as we realize their presence, our will soon learns to turn away from them instinctively and they become as harmless as the barking of a chained dog. Evil thoughts may cross our minds, bad desires may stir our hearts, vicious inclinations may cause momentary perturbations in our members; yet meanwhile we possess our souls in peace, because our will has been taught to withhold its consent where conscience raises its voice in solemn protest. It is these temptations that are to us a

source of the greatest blessings; because though inciting us to sin they nevertheless lead us on to the practice of virtue.

The matter assumes quite a different aspect when temptations are voluntary. In that case we are the direct cause of the temptation and the entire responsibility rests on our own shoulders. For a voluntary temptation is one to which we expose ourselves without sufficient reason. Thus, for example, a person reads a certain class of books, which, although not positively bad, yet he knows by experience always cause him temptations against holy purity. There is no reason in the world why he should read these books, except his own curiosity. Yet he reads them, with the full knowledge that he will be tempted and also that there is objectively nothing to justify his action. His temptations are entirely voluntary. And so in every other line, where a person without sufficient reason does that which he knows, either from past experience or from his common sense, to be the occasion of temptation. And does he commit sin by thus exposing himself unnecessarily? That depends on the risk which he runs. If he knows beforehand that in all probability he will consent to the temptation, then the very fact that he exposes himself to it without sufficient reason is a sin, and if the matter be serious it is a mortal sin; but if, on the

contrary, he is honestly and sincerely convinced that he will withhold his consent, then there is no sin except perhaps in so far as he yields to an unreasonable curiosity. In any case, whether he yields to the temptation or not, the responsibility for his action is all his own, and he must one day account for it to an all-knowing Judge.

However, from this it does not necessarily follow that we may never expose ourselves to temptations unless compelled thereto by our environment or the occupations wherein we are lawfully engaged. In matters that involve no great risk and where consent would ordinarily not constitute a mortal sin, we may at times be justified in seeking the temptation so as to have an opportunity of practicing virtue; but where the risk is considerable and where the virtue in question is of a somewhat delicate nature, as faith or purity, our only safety lies in flight. In general our rule of action should be to take cheerfully the temptations that come to us unsought and then keep all others at a distance. If we adopt any other plan we engage in dangerous speculations, which usually end in failure.

DAMAGES

"In many things we all offend." JAMES III, 2.

It is not given to man to be so perfect in all his ways as never to make mistakes or to be beyond all passing negligence in the doing of his work. Not even the most painstaking business man can show such a record. And yet these mistakes and negligences cause losses and damages that may lead to serious consequences. Nay, if they are of frequent occurrence and in matters of moment, they may even result in complete failure. Hence the constant watchfulness of those to whom the care of any business has been entrusted. They take note of even the minutest irregularities that may occur, and promptly apply efficacious remedies so as to prevent their recurrence in future.

In this there is contained a most useful lesson for those who are seriously concerned about the salvation of their souls. They, too, are at times guilty of negligence, and as a result cause damages that are difficult to repair. Of course, these damages are not of so serious a nature as to directly imperil their soul's salvation, for if they were they

would imply more than mere negligence; but for all that they are of sufficient importance to call for watchfulness and care on the part of men and women who are sincerely interested in their eternal welfare. They are the losses inflicted by venial sins, which indeed have no power to destroy the spiritual life of the soul yet may greatly impair its vigor and even endanger its very existence. It is these sins that we shall consider on the present occasion.

Has it ever struck you how little most people seem to make of venial sin? They do indeed not say so in so many words, yet, if one were to judge them by their actions, it would almost appear as if they considered venial sin as something which it would be presumption to try to eliminate from their lives. They yield to impatience on the slightest provocation; they criticise the actions of their fellow men without rhyme or reason; they exaggerate and prevaricate in their conversations; they entertain wilful distractions in their prayers; they dilly-dally with temptations even in serious matters, and worse still, they do all this without an apparent qualm of conscience and without any subsequent effort to mend their ways. In confession they may accuse themselves of these transgressions, but that is practically all. That they should be heartily sorry for them and firmly resolve to avoid them in

future they admit indeed in theory, but it is extremely doubtful whether they often reduce it to practice. As a consequence their whole life is one tissue of minor faults, and even the fairest fruit of their labor and prayer and sacrifices is more or less worm-eaten at the core. They are indeed too good to be condemned to hell, yet what a sorry spectacle they must present when they appear at the gates of heaven, and how long a time it will be before these gates open to give them access to their God!

And what is the reason of this apparent indifference to venial sin? Perhaps the most common reason is a want of understanding as to what venial sin really implies. Most of us, I am afraid, are too ready to take comfort from the thought that such and such a thing is only a venial sin and that therefore it doesn't matter much. Yes, it is only a venial sin, but it matters very much indeed! Every venial sin is a real offence against God, and as such it matters much more than any earthly misfortune. Do you know that if venial sins are forgiven at all in this world it is only because the Son of God was good enough to pour out His life blood so as to obtain for us the grace of forgiveness? And then venial sin doesn't matter much? Can you look up to the cross on Calvary and see there the living Christ writhing in His death agony, and still say such and such a thing is only a venial

sin? Can you fix your eyes on the gaping wounds in His hands and feet, in reference to which He so plaintively said by the mouth of the prophet: "With these I was wounded in the house of them that loved me," and then lightly say, it doesn't matter much? It is true, venial sin doesn't matter much in comparison with such as are mortal, but in every other respect it is the greatest evil that can befall us amid all the trials of our earthly life.

In this connection, however, it is well to distinguish between venial sins that are quite deliberate and such as are committed without full consent of the will. Into this latter kind we are commonly betrayed by a momentary weakness or by a sudden surprise. Thus, for instance, when we are harassed by strong temptations, especially when they continue for a considerable length of time, it may easily happen that we do not resist as promptly or as firmly as the gravity of the matter requires, in which case we commit indeed a venial sin but not with full deliberation. So again it may occur that some passion is suddenly aroused, as for example the passion of anger, and before we fully realize what we are doing we utter an uncharitable or profane expression. Unless the impulse was so sudden that we could not check ourselves, as may be the case at times, we again commit what may be called an indeliberate venial sin. In so far as they

are sins at all, failings of this sort are indeed an evil and a great evil; yet there is much to excuse them, because they manifest our weakness rather than a bad will. It is to sins of this kind that we may apply the saying of Holy Writ: "A just man shall fall seven times and rise again." It is too bad indeed that such things should happen, but considering our human limitations it would be strange if they did not.

On the other hand, this matter assumes quite a different aspect when venial sins are committed deliberately. For then there is no longer any question of human weakness but of a positively bad will. The very fact that a sin is deliberate implies that a person weighs the matter in his mind before he commits the sinful act. He fully realizes that there is question of an offence against God; he is conscious of his duty to resist the temptation that is drawing him on; he knows that he can resist it, and yet he yields without a struggle, endeavoring to quiet his conscience with the thought that it is only a venial sin. As an example we may take what is usually called a white lie. Such a lie hurts no one, in itself the matter is of slight importance, and therefore the telling of that lie is not a mortal sin; yet it is a lie, and as such it is forbidden by the law of God. Now a

person finds himself in a pinch, let us say. If he tells the truth, he must suffer some inconvenience or submit to some humiliation; if he tells a lie, he escapes the difficulty but he offends God. For a moment he weighs his own confusion and God's displeasure in the balance, and then — well, let God be displeased, the lie must be told. The same process of preferring self to God in small matters is repeated in a thousand different ways. It occurs in every deliberate act of impatience, of vanity, of distraction in prayer, of using God's name irreverently, and always because it is only a venial sin, it doesn't matter much.

Now in this there is grave danger, and that for various reasons. First of all it alienates God's good will from persons who sin in this manner. What would you think of a friend who would indeed not kill you, nor set your house on fire, nor break up your family, but for the rest wouldn't mind doing all sorts of mean things against you just to further his own interests? I am afraid you would need all the patience of Job to avoid an open rupture. You would certainly not put yourself out to do him a special favor, and I doubt very much whether you would come to his assistance even if he were in serious trouble. You might, of course, if you had the making of a saint in you, but hardly

on any other supposition. Well, we have no right to expect a different treatment from God if we offend Him repeatedly by deliberate venial sins. He is indeed very patient, very generous, very forgiving; but He is also very just, and justice demands an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

The second danger consists in the fact that thus the door is opened to mortal sins. The very fact that a person freely and deliberately commits venial sins, however small these sins may be, disposes his will to evil, and when this occurs repeatedly such a strong bias towards evil is thereby created that usually the first violent temptation to mortal sin is quite sufficient to bring about a miserable fall. In this we find verified the words of Holy Scripture: "He that contemneth small things, shall fall little by little." And this danger is all the greater because persons who commit deliberate venial sins frequently are in consequence almost wholly indifferent in regard to their spiritual welfare. They belong to that class of unfortunates concerning whom the Holy Ghost says in the Apocalypse: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold, nor hot. I would thou wert cold, or hot. But because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold, nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth." And that is the way it usually ends; they nauseate God by their constant in-

fidelities in small things, and then He vomits them out of His mouth; that is, He permits them to fall into mortal sin and thereby casts them off, either for time or for eternity.

A RASH VENTURE

"Know thou, and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God." JER. II, 19.

To an honest man there are few things more distressing than failure in business. It not only means the loss of his own fortune, although that in itself would be bad enough, but also involves the ruin of others whose hard-earned savings had been entrusted to his keeping. The situation is extremely painful even when brought about by circumstances over which he had no control, but it becomes almost unendurable when he discovers that it is the result of his own negligence or foolhardiness. In any case it is an unfortunate affair, and the sting of it is not likely to cease hurting him for the rest of his life.

Failure in the business of salvation is worse than this. It is always of the victim's own doing, and it involves losses so great that they can never be retrieved by merely human endeavor. And yet these failures are of such frequent occurrence that a casual observer might well be pardoned for concluding that the world is full of fools. Do you know in what these failures consist? Why, they

consist in mortal sin. Every mortal sin involves so tremendous a failure that compared with it the most disastrous bankruptcy in the business world is but a mere trifle.

Aside from the awful consequences that result from failures of this sort, their worst feature consists in the fact that they are deliberately brought about by the person whose ruin is involved. The sinner knows perfectly well that by committing mortal sin he places himself, as far as he is concerned, in the state of eternal damnation. For he has been taught, and he firmly believes, that the least mortal sin causes the loss of sanctifying grace and consequently implies the forfeiture of his title to heaven. God may indeed spare him for the time being, but of this he can have no positive assurance. For all he knows the sinful act may be the last conscious act of his life, and if it is it marks his entrance into hell. Nay, even if God spare him for a while, he cannot be sure of forgiveness. For no sin is ever forgiven without true repentance on the part of the sinner, and how does he know that he will ever repent? The very fact that he deliberately, with conscious knowledge and full consent of the will, makes himself guilty of mortal sin effectually closes the way to repentance as far as his own power comes in question. He freely makes his choice between heaven and hell, and if

God sees fit to ratify that choice it becomes irrevocable. And knowing all this, he freely sins. Was ever business man guilty of such folly?

This is a fact that is all too often overlooked. Many there are who commit mortal sin upon mortal sin and yet never feel apprehensive that some day they may pass the bounds set by God's justice beyond which there is no forgiveness. They have experienced God's mercy in the past and so they venture to presume upon it for the future. Why, they can go to confession at any time, perform the penance enjoined, and all will be well again. Yes, all will be well again if they sincerely repent and firmly resolve to sin no more. But will they do this? For their repentance they depend on the mercy of God, and will God show them mercy? If they go so far as to turn God's mercy into a motive for sinning, they are guilty of presumption and thereby make a mockery of God. Yet as Holy Scripture assures us, God will not be mocked. And even when there is no real presumption the outlook is appalling in the extreme. You say that God is good, and unless a man makes sport of His goodness He is always ready to give the grace of repentance; but I am afraid you hardly understand the full import of your own statement. The very fact that God is infinitely good necessarily implies that He is also infinitely just, and His justice calls

as loudly for vengeance as His mercy pleads for forgiveness. If He grants the sinner time for repentance, He will also grant him the necessary grace; but who of us is sure of life beyond the present moment? No one ever commits a mortal sin but takes the terrible risk of ending in hell. On our own part every mortal sin is a deliberate throwing away of our eternal salvation.

And here the marvel is, the mystery of it all and the pity, that men will not only commit mortal sin but live on in that sin for weeks and months and sometimes for years. They seem never to realize that they are always standing on the very brink of hell. There is absolutely nothing between them and their final doom save the uncertainty of life. Death may overtake them at any time, and if it does all is ended. Like Dives of old they die and are buried in hell. Accidents happen on the most unforeseen occasions; they come like a lightning flash out of a clear sky. No warning of any sort; not even a moment's respite to make an act of contrition. Thousands of persons die in this manner every year. In a twelvemonth hundreds of them meet such a death in every large city. They leave home of a morning in the flush of health, and a few hours later they are brought back as mangled corpses. Whither have their souls gone? Only God knows. Yes, only God knows;

although in such cases, more than in any others, must be applied the general rule, that death is but an echo of life: — as a man liveth so shall he die.

In this, again, persons console themselves with the thought that God is good; that He is anxious to save every soul, and that in consequence He is not likely to take them at such a terrible disadvantage. How foolishly they reason in the light of their own lives need not be pointed out to any one who will look at the matter in a common-sense way. Few things are more inexplicable in God's dealings with this sinful world than that He should save persons from hell if they recklessly live on in the state of mortal sin. On merely human principles it admits of no explanation at all. Just think of it what it really means. We were placed here on earth for the one purpose of serving God; for the one purpose of making all of our actions count for heaven: and instead of doing this, if we commit mortal sin and continue in that state, we are constantly serving the devil; we are not performing a single action that God could possibly reward in the other world. For mark well: actions that are performed in the state of mortal sin do not count for heaven. As far as an eternal reward is concerned they are simply so much energy wasted. They have indeed their use in pre-

paring us for repentance, and without them we should most likely die in our sins; but beyond that they are of no value. Hence under these conditions we give our lives to the devil and then after death we expect to be rewarded by God. During life we do everything to deserve hell and when death comes we hope to be recompensed in heaven! What verdict does your common sense pronounce upon such views? The mystery is not that persons of this sort should die in their sins and repent of their folly in hell, but that any of them should ever be saved. That's the mystery, and that mystery no one can ever hope to fathom save only the infinitely merciful God.

Nor is this condition of things so terrible merely because of the personal risk and consequent loss which it involves, but also on account of the agonizing pain which it must inflict upon our best friend. Do you ever reflect on the most certain truth that you have no better friend in heaven or on earth than your Blessed Saviour? Yet who can measure the sorrow that is necessarily caused Him by every mortal sin and the terrible loss which He thereby incurs. For our souls are His by right of purchase; He bought them at the cost of His own life. "We were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver," says St. Peter, "but

with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled." He loves these souls as His very own; they are His very own; He has paid for them a ransom of infinite value, and yet men and women who believe all this dare take them away from Him, dare snatch them out of His hand and give them to the devil! How can they ever look at a crucifix and yet live on in mortal sin? Would they dare to look into the eyes of a loving mother whose child they had murdered in cold blood? Why, those eyes, staring at them in an agony of horror, would haunt them till their dying day. And is there no such agony in the eyes of their dying Saviour? They have murdered, wilfully and deliberately, a soul that is dearer to Him than ever child was to the most loving of mothers. And still they dare persist in committing sin? Still they dare live on in sin? May God have mercy on them; man would not.

No, we know not what mortal sin really is or we would never allow it to enter our lives; we understand not the desolation it causes in our souls, and the consequent sorrow it brings upon our Best Friend, or we would not suffer it to remain there even for one hour. One day that knowledge will come to us, flooding our hearts and minds as we stand before the great white throne, and God grant that then the shadows may have been lifted

from our lives and that naught be revealed to the searching eye of our Judge save only the tokens of His merciful forgiveness. And yet, as a man liveth so shall he die.

REORGANIZED

"The wickedness of the wicked shall not hurt him, in what day soever he shall turn from his wickedness." EZECH. XXXVIII, 12.

If it be most distressing for an honest man to fail in business, as it assuredly is, then it must of necessity be most consoling for him to have it in his power to retrieve that failure. For this possibility does not only give him an opportunity to make good his own losses, but also to indemnify his creditors and to pay back his indebtedness to his friends. In such a case, he spares no pains to make his new undertaking a success, and his very failure acts as an incentive to put forth his best efforts. He has tasted the bitterness of failure and he anticipates all the more the sweetness of success.

I am quite convinced that something very similar would happen in the case of a person who were allowed to make a second trial at saving his soul. Could any one of those unfortunates who are now tasting the bitterness of life's failure in hell return to earth and begin all over again, not one of them would fail a second time. The mere recollection

of that place of horrors, the personal experience of what it means to lose one's soul, would be an ever present incentive to escape the recurrence of so tragic a misfortune. Well, such a possibility there is none; God has seen fit to give us one chance and only one. If we make a failure of that all is over; for out of hell there is no redemption.

But whilst this is true in the case of those whose doom has been sealed in death, it is not true in reference to those others, who fail indeed, yet whose failure is not necessarily final. Every mortal sin places man on the brink of hell, but not within its fiery depths. If God in His mercy gives the sinner grace to repent, he may yet retrieve the fortune which he so foolishly squandered; he may still wrest a glorious victory from his ignominious defeat and make his very failure the occasion of a greater triumph. This he may achieve through penance, which, as the holy Fathers of the Early Church so aptly put it, is the second plank of safety after the shipwreck caused by sin.

What a source of consolation this must be to all who at one time or another had the misfortune of falling into mortal sin! Whilst they were under the influence of passion they thought little enough of the consequences of that sin, but when sober reason regained its sway and faith revealed in all its terrible reality the awful havoc that had

been wrought, desolation entered their hearts and the dull foreboding of their final doom found voice in the condemnation passed upon them by their conscience. To them indeed penance is a plank of safety after shipwreck. By the logic of their deeds they preferred hell to heaven, yet that choice need not be irrevocably fixed. If they will do what in them lies, God offers them a second chance. The very fact that He spared their life after their sin was committed is an invitation on His part which beckons them to penance. They may neglect to heed that invitation; they may shrink from the humiliation which penance needs imply, and thus live on in sin until death takes them at unawares; but if they do their eternal loss will be on their own souls; God showed them a mercy which they did not deserve.

Here, however, it must be well understood what is meant by penance. It does not mean merely to confess one's sins. Confession is indeed necessary for forgiveness whenever mortal sin has been committed, but confession does not comprise the whole of penance. It is only a part of it, and for that matter only the least part. Real and effective penance implies a conversion of heart and a change of life. What is of prime importance in this matter is true sorrow for sins and a firm purpose of amendment. The penitent must first seriously consider

what an awful thing mortal sin is, what a terrible loss it entails, how dreadfully it offends the good God, and from these considerations he must gradually pass on to a sincere detestation of sin as the greatest evil that could possibly befall him in this world. His will and his affections must turn away from it so that he can honestly say, with the help of God's grace there shall be an end of sinning, I will sin no more. As long as he is not willing to bring himself to such a disposition of heart his penance is mere make-believe and his confession will profit him nothing. Nay, he will leave the confessional with an additional and terrible sin upon his conscience, a sacrilegious confession. The confessional is indeed a tribunal of mercy rather than of justice, nevertheless justice is not excluded from it but only tempered with mercy. A confession without true sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment would simply be a mockery of the infinitely just God, and such mockery must needs be the gravest of sins.

Of course, this does not mean that we must stay away from confession until we are quite certain that we shall never sin again. That would be going to the other extreme and only involve us in greater sin. Knowing our past weakness we may have reason to fear that at some future time, when a strong temptation overtakes us, we shall again

miserably fall; but that fear of future falls does not destroy our present sorrow for sins and our firm purpose of amendment. If here and now we are truly sorry and are firmly determined to do all we can to avoid relapse into sin, we have the proper disposition to make a good confession. With such a disposition we can leave the future to God; He will know how to provide. What we must aim at is sincerity and honesty both with God and our own conscience, not vain fear and foolish scrupulosity.

Whether we have this sincerity and honesty we may readily infer from our willingness to avoid the proximate occasions of sin and to use the necessary means for securing amendment. Thus for instance, if a person has been repeatedly guilty of impure thoughts and imaginations, which resulted from reading suggestive stories or frequenting questionable shows, he would certainly not be sincere and honest in his purpose of amendment if he did not at the same time make up his mind to avoid such reading and to stay away from such shows. He knows well enough from his past experience that these indulgences, although not positively bad in themselves, lead him almost invariably into sin, and there is no necessity of his taking the risk; hence if he will persist in taking it, he will also persist in sinning, and his purpose of amendment

is only a lying farce. Similarly with all other sins that are occasioned by frequenting certain places, associating with certain persons, or indulging in certain actions. To say that you will avoid them and yet are not willing to give up the occasion when you have it in your power to do so, is neither more nor less than lying to your own souls and to God, and the effect of that lie is a sacrilegious confession.

The same holds true in reference to the means which must be used to avoid sin or to eradicate evil habits. It frequently happens, especially when sins are committed habitually, that ordinary precautions are not sufficient to insure amendment, and your own good sense or your confessor will suggest certain practices as likely to prove effective. Thus your confessor may request you to say every day certain prayers, to abstain altogether from intoxicating drink, to receive the sacraments every week for some time to come, or other practices of a similar kind as your particular case may require. If you are unwilling to follow any of these suggestions, although in your hearts you realize that this alone would save you from a relapse, then no matter how much you may insist that you will not sin again, you have neither true sorrow for your sins nor a firm purpose of amendment, and your penance is a mere sham. Of course, your con-

fessor is not likely to give you absolution under these conditions; but if on account of some deception on your part he is induced to do so, his absolution is null and void and your confession is sacrilegious. You may succeed in deceiving your confessor, but you cannot deceive God.

Hence you see that penance is truly a serious affair, and that without sincerity and honesty on the part of the penitent it is quite impossible. If however the penitent is honest and sincere, and is willing to do all that may be required, then its effects are truly marvellous. It not only takes away all mortal sins however grievous, not only restores the sinner to the friendship of God and gives back to him his title to heaven, but it puts him practically again into the same condition in which he was before he sinned. All the merits which he lost through sin are restored, and he can truly begin over again. Nothing is lost except the time which he spent in the state of mortal sin; nor is this entirely lost, because the good works which he then performed were in some way a preparation for penance and through penance have at least an indirect bearing on his eternal salvation.

V

ASSOCIATIONS

CHURCH ALLEGIANCE

"Going therefore, teach ye all nations." MATTH. XXVIII, 19.

It is a universally acknowledged fact, that business conducted on a large scale and backed up by sufficient capital yields greater profits than smaller concerns, which are usually hampered by the want of available resources. Hence it has become the custom in the modern business world to form vast associations for commercial purposes, which are commonly known as companies, firms or trusts, according to the nature of the association in question. Many of them have acquired rather unsavory reputations, not because of their intrinsic nature, but owing to the unscrupulous methods which they follow in their business transactions. On account of the vastness of their interests and resources they wield an immense power, and this power they may use either for good or for evil. In themselves, however, they are legitimate means for the attainment of honest gain; and if they work harm to others, it is through an abuse of power, not through its legitimate use.

It would not be precisely correct to say, that God

has established anything like a trust or monopoly in reference to the business of salvation, for the attainment of salvation is primarily the work of each individual for himself; and yet whilst this is true, it is not less true that He has formed a certain very definite association of which individuals must take account if they would work out the salvation of their souls. This association is the Church of Christ. Of this Church Christ Himself has said: If any man will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican; that is, as one who has placed himself outside the pale of salvation. This same dependence of individuals on the Church was very pithily expressed by some of the early Fathers, when they said: "Whoso will not have the Church as his mother cannot have God as his Father." Or as St. Augustine puts it: "Out of the Church you may have everything except salvation. You may have honors, you may have the Sacraments, you may have the Bible, you may have and preach the faith in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; but salvation you cannot have." Hence the much abused, but in a certain sense very true saying: "Out of the Church there is no salvation." That is, if anyone through his own fault, whether through obstinacy or through culpable negligence, fails to become a member of the Church which Christ has established

on earth, he is by that very fact deprived of the means necessary for saving his soul.

Nor need this appear strange to any one who will give the matter serious thought. For salvation presupposes belief in revealed truth, since without faith it is impossible to please God and be saved; yet where will the individual learn what he must believe unless there exists somewhere on earth a competent authority to act as his guide? And if there exists such an authority, he must needs be submissive to it in all matters of faith; for an authority to which one need not submit in its own sphere of action is no authority at all. It is true enough, the Holy Ghost could reveal to each single soul the truths necessary for salvation; but that He does not do so is painfully evident. Our separated brethren have worked on that supposition for the last three hundred years and they have succeeded only in producing the veriest Babel of confusion even as regards the most essential truths of religion. If the Holy Ghost has inspired them, He is in very truth a spirit of contradiction. Some of them will have it that Christ is God, whilst others contend that He was only a man. Some say there is a hell, and others say there isn't. Some affirm that the Holy Eucharist is truly the body and blood of Christ, whilst others hold that it is only bread and wine. And so all along the

line; what one affirms the other denies, and yet they all claim to be guided by the Holy Ghost. A strange phenomenon indeed, which fully justifies the complaint of Beza, one of the early reformers. "Our people," he says, "are carried away by every wind of doctrine. If you know what their religion is to-day, you cannot tell what it may be to-morrow. There is not a single point which is not held by some of them as an article of faith, and by others rejected as an impiety." And yet, as they will have it, it is the Holy Ghost who guides them in their faith. Was ever before such blasphemy uttered by mortal man?

Furthermore, Christ has not left this matter in any sense to human conjecture. When He said to His Apostles: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth; going therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," He pronounced for all times the death sentence of private judgment in matters of religion. For the teaching authority which He then established was to have perpetual duration, as is, aside from all other arguments, quite plain from the words which He immediately added: "And behold," He said to them, "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." The

Apostles themselves, who were thus divinely constituted teachers in all matters of faith, would indeed after a short time be snatched away by death; a few brief years after Christ's ascension into heaven they were to lay down their lives for the faith which they had been sent to preach: but the teaching authority conferred on them by Christ was not to perish with them; that was to be handed down from generation to generation as long as there should be need of guidance and direction in matters of faith. For as Christ had sent them to teach all nations, so did he through their agency also send others to whom He extended the self-same promise: "I will be with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

If therefore faith is necessary for salvation, as it most assuredly is, it requires no very subtle reasoning to show that the individual must in his religious belief be subject to the direction and guidance of the Church. For the Church as a guide in matters of faith is necessarily identical with the teaching authority established by Christ. As Christ said to His Apostles: "Whoso heareth you heareth me, and whoso despiseth you despiseth me"; so did He also say in reference to the Church: "If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." That Church was built upon Peter, the Rock chosen by Christ as its im-

movable foundation, and against it the powers of hell shall not prevail. In that Church the believer is safe in the faith which he professes, because he is watched over by Christ Himself; outside of it he is carried about by every wind of doctrine, because his faith is not of God but of man.

And what is thus true of religious belief is equally true of religious practice and moral conduct. Faith is indeed necessary for salvation, yet faith alone will save no man; because faith without works is dead. Hence the Church that teaches us the saving faith, must also teach us how to live in accordance with that faith. As in civil matters we are guided by the laws of the State, so in religious and moral matters must we be directed by the precepts of the Church. She has indeed no monopoly of salvation in the sense that she can admit this one to heaven and condemn that one to hell; but she can and must make laws of worship and conduct the observance or violation of which will in the day of judgment decide our fate for all eternity. For in her own proper sphere of action she has power to bind and to loosen in such wise, that whatever she binds on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatever she loosens on earth shall be loosened also in heaven, according to Christ's own infallible word.

This authoritative position of the Church in

matters of faith and morals is anything but acceptable to the modern world. The tendency of the age is towards absolute independence, although that independence must necessarily end in chaos. It is because the Church stands before the world as the embodiment of an authority which will brook no gainsaying that she is made the object of fierce persecution in nearly every land. It is not her opposition to human progress, not her interference with matters of state, not her advocacy of state absolutism as opposed to the rights of individuals that causes her to be decried as reactionary; for even her worst enemies are aware that she cannot in justice be charged with either the one or the other: but because she authoritatively announces the claims of a supernatural religion that has become distasteful to men and women who are of the earth earthy, and because she fearlessly condemns all forms of lawlessness whether in civil or religious matters, hence she is pointed out as an anachronism that must be gotten rid of either by fair means or by foul. The enemies of law and order know too well that she is the only force that can frustrate their efforts, and for this reason they bend all their energies to crush her out of existence. But they forget that she rests securely upon a rock against which the powers of hell shall not prevail.

SECURITIES

"Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." MATTH. XVI, 18.

The success of business associations depends in many instances on their reputation for solidity. If their reserve capital, for instance, is known to be so great as to preclude all possibility of failure, they have it in their power to make profitable investments where others would either not be able to do business at all or else only on terms that would materially interfere with the expected returns. As a general rule business men look first to the safety of their capital and then to the rate of profits.

We would naturally expect something similar to this in regard to the business of salvation, since that too must be carried on under the direction of an association which exercises a most far-reaching control. Salvation is indeed the work of individuals, but as guided by the Church, and therefore it is of prime importance that each single individual should be deeply impressed with the fact that the Church's guidance cannot possibly lead him

astray. He must have the fullest assurance that her teaching is infallibly true, that her laws are necessarily just, and that her authority can never fail. Had he any reasonable doubts regarding these points, he could at best but consider her as a blind guide leading her blind children to possible destruction. Nay, he could not consistently submit himself to her authority; for an authority that can err in matters of such importance is not of God.

It was for this reason that our Blessed Saviour took such pains to make it clear to all that His Church should be an infallible guide to salvation for all men and at all times. His very promise of founding a Church emphasizes this prerogative in a most striking manner. After changing the name of Simon, the Prince of the Apostles, to that of Cephas or Peter, which is the Greek name for rock, He said to him: "Thou art Peter (that is, Rock); and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He promised not merely to found a Church, but also to provide for it in such a way that it should forever bid defiance to all the powers of hell. Now the powers of hell attack the Church precisely through error in faith and through sin in the conduct of her members; hence it was in reference to these that Christ pledged His own infallible word

to make His Church a safe guide. And this prerogative of infallible guidance was to be conferred through Peter and his successors, who are to the Church what a solid foundation is to a building, giving it stability and strength. For this reason He completed His promise by adding: "And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven"; thereby promising supreme governing power in all that concerns the interests of His Church.

That Christ kept His promise and in due course of time established a Church against which the powers of hell should not prevail is clearly stated in Holy Scripture. He prayed specially for Peter that his faith should not fail, and commissioned him to confirm his brethren. He conferred upon Peter His own teaching authority, bidding him to feed His lambs and His sheep and to guard the flock for whose salvation He, the Son of God, had poured out His redeeming blood. He laid upon Peter, and in conjunction with him also upon the other Apostles, the solemn command to preach the Gospel to all nations, to confer Baptism on all believers in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to forgive the sins of the faithful, and to nourish them with His own flesh

and blood, promising that in all this He would give His divine assistance, not only to them, but also to their successors even to the consummation of the world. He Himself had come into the world to bear testimony to the truth, and that testimony, divine and infallible, He perpetuated in the Church to whose care He entrusted His own mission of saving souls.

The Apostles were indeed fallible men, and so are their successors to whose guidance the Church is entrusted to-day, but the truth of their teaching in all matters of faith is vouched for by Christ's own infallible word. It is for this reason that Christ so solemnly commanded every nation and each single individual to receive that teaching under pain of eternal damnation. "He that believeth and is baptized," He said, "shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." No such obligation to believe could possibly have been imposed, had not the Church been dowered with infallibility in the exercise of her teaching office. For where there is room for error in the teacher, there must be room for doubt in the pupil; and not even God Himself can bind the mind of man to accept as true what may be false. Yet in the matter of religious faith Christ leaves nothing whatever to the choice of individuals; all without exception must believe whatever is taught them by the Church: for

if they believe not they shall be condemned, or as the Protestant Authorized Version has it, they "shall be damned."

Two facts, therefore, are certain beyond all possibility of doubt. First, that the Church of Christ cannot lead us astray in matters of faith and morals, because in reference to these she has the divine assistance which can never fail. Secondly, she shall endure for all time, because Christ has promised to be with her even to the end of the world. Both of these facts need special emphasis at the present time. It has become quite the fashion of late to affect great concern about the future of Christianity. The ominous prophecies of infidels that the last hour of Christianity will soon strike, that the imperishable Church is doomed to destruction, that science is destined to take the place of religion, seem to have struck fear into the hearts of many who are still devoutly attached to the faith of their forefathers. How little such faint-hearted Christians understand the nature of that Church to which Christ has entrusted His own divine work of saving the world! Individual members of that Church may indeed suffer shipwreck in their faith; they may reject her teaching, despise her counsels, transgress her laws; but she herself remains forever what Christ made her, the infallible teacher and guide against whom the powers of hell shall

not prevail. Whole nations may tear themselves away from her motherly embrace; they may crucify her as the Jews of old crucified her divine Founder; but her *consummatum est* shall not be heard until the shadows of time merge into the brightness of eternity.

The Church is not the work of man but of God, and the work of God endureth forever. She has outlived the brute force of pagan Rome and the subtle intrigues of Christian Constantinople, she has survived the hatred of misguided heretics and the boasting of infidel philosophers, and she will outlive all that Masonic hate and Atheistic malice can contrive against her; for she is fated not to die. Not a century of her protracted existence has passed which did not witness the celebration of her anticipated funeral obsequies, yet the agony of her repeated death struggles has invariably ended in the acquisition and manifestation of a more vigorous life. Her enemies may now and then have their short day of apparent triumph, but it will end, as it has always ended, in their own defeat. They are all passing away, but she still remains and ever will remain, unchanged in her doctrines, unchanged in her constitution, unchanged in the sublime end for which she was called into being — the salvation of all, even of her enemies, if so be that they repent of their error.

It is in this most of all that she differs from the many sects that strew the highway of her triumphal march across the twenty centuries of her existence. Born of man they are necessarily subject to all the vicissitudes of man's mortal nature. They are "as a ship that passeth through the waves; whereof when it is gone by, the traces cannot be found, nor the path of its keel in the waters." They may tremble at each new discovery of science, but she never wavers. They may change their doctrines to suit the whim of so-called scientists, but she never yields an iota of the faith entrusted to her keeping. She knows that truth is one; she knows that the truths of nature cannot gainsay the truths of revelation, because both are but the outward manifestation of the one God of infinite truth, and hence she has the fullest assurance that each new scientific discovery can only serve to bring out more clearly the truth of her own doctrines. Scientific quacks may indeed shout themselves hoarse in their efforts to convince the world that science has undone Christianity; that science has shown the impossibility of miracles, the absurdity of revelation, the uncertainty of the great hereafter; but their clamors are invariably turned to their own confusion. She fearlessly takes up every argument which this false science brings against her, lays bare its fallacy, upsets the conclu-

sion, and so strengthens her own position by the discomfiture of her enemies. Like the eternal hills she has strength to breast each raging storm, and when the clouds have rolled away she only shines the brighter in truth's unfading splendor.

LOYALTY

"In what place soever thou shalt be, either in death or in life, there will thy servant be." II KINGS xv, 21.

Whenever a business association is formed, the different members thereof are by the very fact of their admission supposed to promise loyal adhesion to all of its various provisions. Usually there is a written agreement clearly stating what is permitted to individual members and what is forbidden. This agreement comprises all that is essential, yet true business loyalty would carry the parties thereto far beyond its explicit provisions. That loyalty reaches out to the interests of the association in every shape and form. It leads the members thereof to think highly of it, to speak well of it, to give it a prominent standing in the business world. This is, in fact, the case with regard to any and every association or society of men, and where it is wanting there is by that very fact something seriously amiss either in the association itself or in its members.

Now the Church of Christ, whereof we are all members, has in this respect similar claims. She demands loyalty of us all, and that a loyalty of the

very highest type. She is interested not merely in our temporal welfare, although she is doing her share in that respect too, but she endeavors with all her strength to promote the eternal happiness of our immortal souls. All her energies and her very existence is devoted exclusively to the furtherance of our best interests. At our Baptism she pledged herself to watch and ward us as the children of Christ's love; to guide us by her wise counsels, to nourish us with the bread of life, to heal us from sin, to prepare us for the life of glory that was purchased for us by the blood of her Spouse. She promised us a mother's affection and a mother's care, and this promise she keeps until our dying day. At each morning's earliest dawn she offers for us the blood of the Lamb, to strengthen the living and to release the departed. Seven times each day she sends up her petitions to the throne of God's mercy, to draw down upon us the blessings of heaven. Whilst we are in health she invites us to enter her sanctuaries, there to hear Christ's own message of salvation, to receive the forgiveness of our sins, and to be strengthened against all adversities at the banquet table of our God. When sickness overtakes us she hastens to our assistance with all the divine helps entrusted to her keeping; she encourages us in our fears, strengthens us in our weakness, and at the last dread moment stands

between us and our judge, inclining His sentence to mercy's side. Oh, yes, she keeps her promises and redeems her pledges.

And this fidelity in her our Mother calls for loyalty in us her children. There is a contract between her and us that is written not in ink, but in the blood of God's own Son. When we pronounced our baptismal vows, either in person or by proxy, we promised faith in her teaching, submission to her authority, respect for her laws. This promise was recorded in the eternal account books of God, and by it we shall stand or fall on the day of judgment. You may object, as some foolishly did object in times past, that, as you were baptized in infancy, these obligations were thrust upon you without your consent, and that therefore you cannot be bound by them, unless perhaps you gave your personal approval after coming to the age of reason. But this objection is futile. The very fact that God adopts the child as His own makes the promises of the sponsors binding upon it without any subsequent approval on its part. You forget that God has not left it to our choice whether we wish to live our lives in the natural or in the supernatural order. He has imposed a most solemn obligation upon all to receive Baptism and thus to become members of the Church, and hence when Baptism is received in infancy it necessarily

carries with it all the obligations which Church membership implies. It is indeed a privilege to be adopted as God's own child, but the acceptance of that privilege is a matter of obligation, and so is also the acceptance of all the duties contained therein.

This may perhaps become somewhat clearer if we bear in mind what happens in the natural order. Thus when a child is born of parents who are citizens of a certain state, the child is by its very birth a citizen of the same state. It is entitled to all the rights and privileges accorded by the state to its citizens, but at the same time it is also subject to all the laws of its native land. When the child grows up into a man, there is no further need of any declaration on his part that he accepts the obligations implied in his citizenship; every one understands that these obligations are binding even against his will, and if he violates them he is made to bear the consequences. It is true, he has it in his power to renounce his citizenship and leave the country of his birth; but as long as he retains his inherited rights, so long must he also fulfill all the duties which these rights imply. Now as the divine adoption through Baptism can never be cancelled, the obligations flowing therefrom must necessarily remain in force forever. Hence every one who has been baptized, whether in infancy or in

later years, is by that very fact bound in the most solemn manner to serve Christ under the guidance and direction of the Church which He established on earth.

From this it ought to be quite plain that the observance of the Church's precepts is a matter of essential obligation. These precepts have the same binding force which they would have if they had been given directly by Christ Himself. When He said to Peter: "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven," He promised full legislative power to the Church of which Peter was to be the first visible head. That power extends itself to all that concerns faith and morals, and is to be exercised over all the members of the Church.

This being the case, we may easily judge what sort of Catholics they are who neglect to hear Mass on Sundays, disregard the laws of fast and abstinence, fail to receive the Sacraments at the appointed times, or marry out of the Church. They are Catholics merely in name, and before God they are accounted as the heathen and publican. So far from being loyal to the Church, they are simply traitors to their most solemn obligations in her regard, and if they dare appear before the judgment

seat of Christ without having made amends, they will hear from Him the sentence of eternal reprobation. For "whoso despiseth you," He says, "despiseth me, and whoso despiseth me, despiseth Him that sent me," that is, God Himself.

That we must all be loyal in this respect is so evident that only the wilfully blind can fail to see it. But there is another loyalty which ought also to be a matter of the highest honor with us, yet which is not rarely wanting in persons who would not dare to violate the least of the Church's precepts. It is the loyalty of sentiment and affection, which manifests itself in an unfailing readiness to take the part of the Church in any difficulty that may arise. We must remember that the Church holds in our regard the place of a mother, and she is entitled to all the respect and love and devotion that any earthly mother can look for in her children. Hence what we would not tolerate in others in respect to our mothers, that we must not tolerate in respect to the Church. What we would not do or say against our mothers, that we must not do or say against the Church. Her honor is our honor, her shame is our shame, simply because she is our mother.

Do you always act on this principle? Do you stand up boldly and unflinchingly against the vile slanderers who, by crafty insinuations or open

calumny, charge the Church with ignorance in her teaching and with interested motives in her dealings with the faithful? Do you resent the charges of bigotry, fanaticism, intolerance, or immorality so often urged against the Church by misinformed Protestants or recreant backsliders? Or do you not all too often lend a willing ear to scandal-mongers, who respect neither priests nor bishops nor the Pope himself in their eagerness to find fault with the Church whose interests they so basely betray? I don't know what you personally would do or are doing, but this I know that many Catholics are so dead to all sense of shame that they take sides with the enemies of the Church on the slightest provocation. The Fairbanks incident, the Ferrer case, the Masonic cabals in France and Portugal have made this quite plain in our own day. And these Catholics call the Church their mother? Poor mother!

CIVIC OBLIGATIONS

"There is no power but from God." Rom. xiii, 1.

In many business associations the constituent parts are not single individuals, but firms or companies that are interested in some particular line of commercial pursuit. They are complete business associations in themselves, but for the sake of greater gain they unite with other concerns of similar interests and thus form what is commonly known as a Merger or Trust. By doing this, useless expenses are saved and demoralizing competition is avoided, and as a result there is peace and harmony in business transactions and a larger share in the net profits.

There is something similar to this in the supernatural order as referred to the business of salvation. The Church of Christ, as explained in the preceding pages, is by divine appointment directly concerned with the salvation of individuals. She has been established by Christ as the guardian of faith and morals, and under her direction the individual must work out the salvation of his soul. But besides the Church of Christ, there are other

associations which have a claim on the individual in their own proper sphere of authority, although they themselves are in the matter of faith and morals likewise subject to the direction of the Church. The first of these is known as the State, which forms an organized society, having its own laws and exercising a legitimate authority over its members in all matters of merely civil and social interest. How and to what extent the State can affect the work of salvation, we shall briefly examine on the present occasion.

In what regards the relations of individuals to the State, two points are deserving of special emphasis at the present time. The first of these is the certain fact, although it does not go unchallenged in our day, that in its own proper sphere the State is possessed of an authority which comes from God, and which therefore must be respected by all who are desirous of working out their salvation. Whether the form of government be monarchical or democratic makes no difference whatever as far as State authority comes in question. Man is by nature a social being, destined by his Creator to live in an organized society, and therefore he is by the will of God subject to the laws by which society must be governed. The people may establish a form of government to suit their own taste, but once that government has been

established, it has authority to make laws and to enforce their observance. Without such an authority civil government and civil society itself would be impossible, and God's own intention, clearly manifested in making man a social being, would be frustrated. It is frequently stated that the authority of the State comes from the people, but that statement is only partially true. The authority of the State comes from the people in as far as it is left to them to choose one form of government rather than another; but it comes from God in as much as State authority implies that one man, or a body of men, have power over their fellow men. It is in this sense that the Apostle says: "All just authority is from God."

From this truth, which no Christian of whatever persuasion can possibly deny, some very important consequences follow. And the first is this, that any and every form of anarchy is not merely an offense against the State but a sin against God. In defying the authority of the State, these enemies of human society defy the authority of God Himself, from whom the governing power of the State is ultimately derived. Their fundamental principle that all men are equal is indeed true enough when taken in the abstract, but when applied to concrete conditions it is glaringly false. All men have the same specific nature and in this they are necessarily

equal; but all men cannot possibly occupy the same relative position in human society and in this respect equality is merely a name. There can be no law and order where no one has a right to command; yet without law and order human society cannot exist, and hence the right to command must necessarily be assumed. It is true, if you rule God out of existence such an assumption has nothing to rest on except its own necessity; but that only shows that human society cannot get along without God. Hence every form of anarchy is a revolt against God as it is treason against the State, and as its promoters are justly punished here on earth so shall they also be punished hereafter.

The second consequence affects all those socialistic endeavors which set at naught the authority of the State in the regulation of economic conditions. The relation of Capital and Labor does not concern individuals only; in its social aspect it must necessarily fall under the cognizance of the State. Hence when the State deems it advisable to enact certain laws, which are necessary for the preservation of peace and order and social justice, these laws have a binding force upon the individual conscience and disregard of them is a crime against lawful authority. Socialism may not be wrong in all its ends and aims, but it is decidedly wrong in many of its methods. To cause social strife and

economic disorders is unjust and cannot be excused on the plea that the working man is robbed of his earnings by unscrupulous Capitalists. These Capitalists have much to answer for, and some of them are little better than highway robbers, yet they must be made harmless, not by reprisals that are only robbery of another kind, but by an impartial application of the laws that exist for the protection of all. And this rebuke of Socialism applies to some extent also to Labor Unions. For although they have become an economic necessity and are highly commendable for their professed aim of bettering the conditions of Labor, nevertheless where they go against the just laws of the State, they place themselves in opposition not only to human but also to divine authority.

Similar consequences result for the individual in all his civic relations. If the State has a God-given right to enact just laws, then the individual citizen must have a corresponding duty to observe these laws. To defy them is rebellion against God as well as against the State, to transgress them to the injury of others is an injustice, and to evade them is ordinarily a serious matter of conscience. It may be that some laws are intended to be only penal in their effect upon the transgressor; but this is a matter for the State to determine, not for the individual to presume.

Here it must, however, be noted, that the authority of the State is not unlimited. It is strictly confined to matters of merely civic interests. No State can ever justly presume to legislate in purely domestic affairs or in anything that appertains to religion. And the reason is obvious. For as the authority of the State comes ultimately from God, it must necessarily be confined within the limits which God Himself has placed. Yet God has established His Church with full powers to regulate religious affairs, and He has also established the home with its own rights and prerogatives. Hence where the government enacts laws that interfere with the free exercise of religion as decreed by God, or places undue restrictions upon the enjoyment of domestic privileges, it assumes an authority which it does not possess and its laws are by that very fact unjust and without binding force. I do not say that individual citizens are in every such instance justified to set these laws aside, for it may be required at times to submit even to unjust laws until a competent authority has decided that they are unjust; nevertheless the State in enacting them goes beyond the reach of its power and cannot bind the consciences of its citizens.

In practice such unwarranted legislation is not at all of rare occurrence, especially in these modern times when many governments are neither

more nor less than so many cliques of Atheistic Freemasons. As an instance take France with her iniquitous laws against religious associations and the education of children in their own faith. Every one of these laws is a glaring abuse of the authority which God has entrusted to the State, and the persons affected by them are perfectly within their rights to refuse obedience. Nay, in our own country there exist certain conditions which do not place the State in a much more favorable light, although in general equal justice is meted out to all. To tax Catholic parents for the support of schools to which they cannot in conscience send their children implies anything but legal justice. We pay the prescribed taxes not because the law is just, for it certainly is not, but because we rather pay a fine for being Catholics than raise the standard of revolt. So again when the State presumes to grant divorces from the bonds of marriage it is acting without any authority whatever. Marriage is not a civil affair; it is a matter of religion, and the State can do no more than regulate certain civil effects necessarily resulting from the marriage contract. In these and similar cases the State has no power, and when it presumes to legislate every legitimate means should be used to frustrate its efforts.

DOMESTIC INTERESTS

"If any man have not care of his own and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." I Tim. v, 8.

In the business world and its many interests, the home as such has no place. It stands as something apart from the stress and strain of business transactions. It is a place of welcome rest and quiet enjoyment, whither one may retire after the strenuous work of office and counting room has been brought to a temporary close. And a blessing it is; for were it not for the home and its innocent pleasures, business men and women would sooner or later be turned into mere machines. The really human part of their nature would inevitably become atrophied.

In this respect the business of salvation proceeds along altogether different lines. It must be carried on in the home as well as in the market place; nay, much more effectively and with more far-reaching results. The home is by divine institution intended to be a school of virtue and sanctity, whence come forth men and women who are an honor to the Church and a blessing to the

State. It is a place where love should be most ardent, affections most sincere, and where the altar of sacrifice for the comforts of others should never be without its willing victims. The sanctity that does not shine brightest at home is but a base counterfeit, and the virtue that will not thrive by the fireside is not worthy of the name. What men and women are at home that they usually are before God, and what they are lacking at home that they cannot make up for even in God's sanctuary. A saint at home is in most instances also a saint abroad, but a saint abroad is not rarely found to be a fiend at home. The most unfailing test of virtue is one's own fireside.

The home must first of all be a place where the most affectionate love binds heart to heart and soul to soul in a union that is stronger than death. God Himself intended it as love's own trysting place, by establishing between husband and wife a union so close and intimate that, as Our Blessed Saviour so forcefully expresses it, "they are not two, but one flesh." That is, they are so completely identified with one another that although they are two distinct personalities, they are nevertheless but one in thought, one in desire, one in aspiration, and one in the perfect harmony of their lives. As they are one principle of physical life in reference to their offspring, so must they also be one

principle of moral life in regard to the household over which they preside. Around them their children must gather in reverential love and with unbounded devotion, and even their servants must be drawn to them by an affection and trust which makes them feel that they, too, in their proper way, are members of the same family circle. Such is the home intended by God as the trysting place of love.

But over and above this bond of mutual love and affection, the home must be sanctified by the spirit of religion, so that it may be in very truth a shrine of family worship. A home over which religion does not hover as its own guardian angel is built on sand, and the first wave of adversity is likely to make of it a heap of unsightly ruins. A merely human love may be sweet; it may be affectionate and generous whilst the glow of prosperity transfigures the home into a paradise of pleasure; but unless it be entwined around the firmly rooted tree of religion, it has no staying powers against the storms of life's many trials. Nay, unless religion fecundates the merely human love which unites husband and wife, parents and children, into one happy family circle, the home can never become what it was intended to be, the nursery of godly men and women, who, because of their consistent training in virtue, grow up as the pride of the Church and the strength of the State. A home

from which the spirit of religion has been banished is at best but a body without a soul, and although it may send forth from its desecrated threshold strong men and fair women, yet it will never add one iota to the moral worth of human society.

Now it is in this that our first weakness lies. America, "the land of the free and the home of the brave," is fast becoming a nursery of moral slaves, because it is banishing religion from the sacred precincts of its homes as it has already banished the same from the classrooms of its schools. Aside from our godless education, the blackest curse under which this fair land is groaning is the destruction of the Christian home. We have splendid mansions wherein to display the vulgar show of our family plate; comfortable eating houses where all that can tempt a gourmet's palate is provided in rich profusion; luxurious resting places where men may while away their time in idleness and women busy themselves with trifling nothings: — we have all this, but where are our homes? There still are a few, thank God, but their number is fast decreasing with each passing year. Some forty thousand of them are every year broken up by our divorce courts, and of those that remain perhaps only a small minority deserve the name.

A true home means more than the roof-tree we call our own; more than the structure of brick and

mortar which we denominate a house; more than the dwelling wherein we eat and sleep and enjoy life's many comforts: — it means the hallowed resting place of loves that are most sacred, of affections most unselfish. It means the place where two human lives are linked in one, to love and to labor, to rejoice and to suffer, and to be the fountainhead whence flow other human lives all "journeying onward in the measure of one melody" of more than earthly happiness. It is the shrine of family worship, the sanctuary of God's blessed presence, where heart speaks to heart, and soul clings to soul; where the blessings of love and the bonds of blood "clasp into one close intimacy the hearts of those who hand in hand journey heavenward."

Such is the true concept of a Christian home, heaven's vestibule in this land of exile; and this concept is daily growing more shadowy as modern materialistic ideas are making their inroads into the hearts of Christian parents. In their wild rush after social distinction and material comforts, husband and wife find no time to contemplate that one true home which God Himself established on earth in the days of old, and after which every Christian home should be fashioned, the little home at Nazareth, where Jesus, Mary and Joseph formed the first Christian family. In the good olden times,

when the service of God was still recognized as man's chief calling in life, father and mother used to gather their little ones around them, say morning and evening prayers in common, read some edifying and entertaining book, or converse on topics that would draw heart to heart and lift the mind to higher things than earthly self and foolish fashion. But all this is now considered out of date; religion, which once hovered as a guardian angel over the family circle, has been banished from the fireside, and with it the sunshine has gone out of modern home life. Our houses indeed remain, but our homes are passing away.

And yet it is primarily the Christian home that must save society. The Church has indeed been appointed to carry on Christ's saving mission, but she can only reach the individual through the home. If children do not receive a religious home training they will either never come near the church, or if they do they are as a general rule but poor material to work on. Hence the hopelessness of modern social conditions. The world is sick unto death. Society stands aghast at its own vileness. The social world is clamoring for a regeneration — a regeneration must be provided or Church and State will be brought to the brink of ruin. But who shall provide it? Who can provide it, except our Christian parents, and primarily our Christian

mothers? Aside from the direct influence of the Church, the Christian home alone is the world's salvation, and that home is in the last instance of the Christian mother's making. Others have indeed power to mar the home, but her power to make it is greater. As long as we have good Christian mothers, we need fear neither for Church nor State; but in proportion as our mothers fall below their God-appointed ideal, both the one and the other are brought into imminent danger.

Thank God, therefore, if He has blessed you with good Christian mothers; thank Him if He has given you good Christian homes: cherish these homes, love and revere these mothers. They mean more to you in life's solemn hours than all the wealth of nations. Money can buy splendid mansions, but money cannot buy a true home. That is builded up not of brick and mortar, but of virtuous deeds and the bonds of holy love. Oh, make of your homes in very truth the "dearest, sweetest spot on earth," where God Himself would love to dwell. Build them upon the strong foundation of your holy faith; let religion be the guardian angel of your firesides, and then God's own blessings will make them what they ought to be, Heaven's vestibule on earth.

LIFE PARTNERSHIP

"What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." MATTH. XIX, 6.

Domestic happiness depends to a large extent upon the indissolubility of the marriage tie. Ideally husband and wife should be in taste and disposition complements of each other, so that their united lives might form one harmonious whole, undisturbed by the dissensions that are apt to arise from the daily contact of two uncongenial temperaments. In real life, however, this is not always the case. Human nature in the concrete has its many faults and foibles, and they are usually not discovered until the enchantment of the honeymoon begins to fade into the commonplaces of family life. Then mutual forbearance becomes a necessity, and much good will is required in both husband and wife to preserve that perfect understanding without which matrimony is at best but a tempestuous sea. Where both parties are firmly convinced that their compact can only be severed by death, they have the strongest of motives to exert this good will, and they usually succeed in avoiding any serious friction in their life-long association; but

where they have the slightest prospect that their union may be ended whenever it becomes a source of regret, this same motive for generous forbearance is taken away, and each little misunderstanding brings them a step nearer to that intolerable condition of estrangement which can only end in a complete disruption of their family relations.

This indisputable fact, all too well established by sad experience, was no doubt one of the reasons why Our Blessed Saviour declared so emphatically that the marriage tie cannot be severed by any power under heaven. When the Pharisees asked Him temptingly whether it was lawful for a man to send away his wife for any cause, He answered without hesitation: "Have ye not read that he who made man from the beginning, made them male and female? And He said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. Therefore, now they are not two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." And when the Pharisees pleaded the law of Moses, which for certain reason permitted a man to put away his wife, He answered: "Because Moses, by reason of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away

his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery, and he that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery."

In these words, as recorded by St. Matthew, an exception is apparently made in the case where the wife has been unfaithful to her marriage vows; but this apparent exception means nothing more than separation from bed and board, without the privilege of remarriage. For, in the same sentence, Christ states absolutely, "he that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery," which would not be true unless even in the case of marital infidelity the marriage bond remained intact. It is only on this supposition that Christ's solemn injunction: "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," is at all intelligible. Moreover, that this was what Christ intended appears to evidence from the accounts of St. Mark, St. Luke and St. Paul, wherein it is stated most emphatically that any attempted marriage during the lifetime of the guilty party, whether husband or wife, is by that very fact an adulterous union forbidden by the law of God.

How, in the face of this clear and emphatic teaching of Christ, we can call ourselves a Christian nation is indeed hard to see. For not only is the separation of husband and wife among us quite

commonly followed by a second marriage, and that even in cases where separation was granted for the most trivial causes, but the practice is legally approved by nearly every State in the Union. One may indeed break Christ's commandments and yet remain at least theoretically a Christian, but when a whole commonwealth deliberately enacts laws that are in open contradiction with the law of Christ, even theoretical Christianity would seem to break down, and there appears nothing left except apostasy. Some try to find a way out of the difficulty by adopting the view of Mayor Gaynor of New York, who, whilst on the bench, handed down the opinion that the State does not pretend to sever the marriage tie by the action of the divorce courts, but only declares that the parties are legally free to contract a new marriage; hence, he continues, if there exists an indissoluble bond which only death can sever, that remains intact by the action of the court, and in consequence the second marriage is neither more nor less than legalized concubinage. This is, likely enough, the purport of our divorce legislation, yet even so the difficulty is not removed; for to legalize concubinage is as much opposed to the law of Christ as to approve the severing of the marriage tie. Hence the question still remains, how can we call ourselves a Christian nation?

Divorce is, indeed, not confined to our country, yet it exhibits features here that are but rarely found in other lands. It has become so common with us that we are fast accustoming ourselves to look upon it as an institution equally as lawful and almost as honorable as marriage. A few decades ago divorcees were still pointed at as persons who had violated their most sacred obligations and who, in consequence, were to be shunned as outcasts by all decent men and women; to-day society receives them with open arms and unblushingly recognizes their presence at the most exclusive social functions. Why, even ministers of the word so far forget the responsibility of their positions as to set the example in this moral outrage to the congregations committed to their charge. Divorce is bad, unspeakably bad, but immeasurably worse is the public indifference to its existence in our midst. As long as any form of social evil draws down upon the perpetrators thereof unqualified reprobation, it can be kept in check and efficacious means are at hand to effect its cure; but when this reprobation gives place to public approval, all other means must needs prove ineffective. In this matter, as in so many others, it is principally the vox populi, the force of public opinion, that decides the issue.

And what are you going to do about it? Will you Catholics sit down idly and thank the Lord

that you are not as other men? If you do the time will come when such an expression of thankfulness will be nothing more than a barefaced lie. Even now Catholic men and women throng our divorce courts and without so much as a blush of shame demand the law's approval of a proposed adulterous union that has branded upon it the angry curse of their God and Saviour. They know, indeed, that men cannot put asunder what God hath joined together; they know that the subsequent marriage ceremony is but the initiation of legalized concubinage; they know that their vows of fidelity to the partner of their guilt is an open profession of a life of sin; they know all this, and in their heart of hearts they believe it, and yet they dare take advantage of a vitiated public opinion in order to prostitute their faith and their virtue at the altar of lust. Non-Catholics who invoke the assistance of the law in their matrimonial troubles may or may not be guilty before God, their ignorance of the moral obligations which they took upon themselves on the day of their marriage may or may not be excusable before the all-seeing Judge, but this cannot be said of Catholics, who have been at all instructed in the faith of their Baptism. The Church does not teach, as did the so-called reformers of the sixteenth century, that marriage is only a worldly thing; she enforces, and

always has enforced the clear and explicit teaching of her divine Founder, "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if the wife shall put away her husband and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

Yes, what are you going to do about it? You must do something. You must act. Mere passivity won't do. The mere fact that none of you, no matter what might be the provocation, would ever openly approve of divorce and remarriage is, indeed, something; but it is not sufficient to meet the issue. You must think highly enough of your personal honor and religious allegiance to shut the doors of your homes in the face of your dearest friends if they dare tamper with the vows which they once made for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, until death should part them from the companion of their choice. You may pity them, you may grieve over their blindness, you may help them to retrace their steps if that be possible; but to approve even implicitly of their conduct by lending them your social support — Never!

This may seem cruel, but it is well to bear in mind that sometimes seeming cruelty is real kindness. When we are assured that in this fair country of ours every year some forty thousand homes are broken up by the action of our divorce courts,

and that over fifty thousand children are by an act of the law deprived of one of their parents, there looms up before us another side of the question that puts the real authors of all this wreckage in a class little different from that of common criminals. We pity the forlorn condition of orphans; we sympathize with the poor waifs who never experienced a mother's tender love or a father's devoted care, but what pity, what sympathy can alleviate the cruel lot of those other wretched beings who are made orphans during the lifetime of their parents, and who must sooner or later come to look upon the authors of their existence as the cause of their ruin? Marriages may at times turn out to be very unhappy; in rare instances there may be sufficient cause for legal separation; but to sever the bonds that alone can enable the offspring of such marriages to look without a blush into the face of father and mother, deserves nothing less than exclusion from Christian society. If this exclusion inflicts pain upon the delinquents, as needs it must, this very pain will act as a warning to others whom an ill-advised sympathy with divorcees would have emboldened to practice a similar cruelty against their own helpless offspring. Were this social interdict against divorcees universally enforced, more good would come of it than the most stringent divorce legislation can ever hope to effect.

PRECAUTIONS

"Which of you having a mind to build a tower, doth not first sit down, and reckon the charges that are necessary, whether he have wherewithal to finish it?" LUKE XIV, 28.

As domestic happiness depends largely upon the indissolubility of the marriage tie, it is evidently of the highest importance to form that tie only after due reflection and mature deliberation. For although every valid marriage, whether prudently contracted or otherwise, is objectively indissoluble, nevertheless it is in practice not always considered as such, at least by persons who follow impulse rather than reason. The mere consciousness of having rashly assumed so heavy a burden, as an ill-advised marriage needs must be, acts as an ever present temptation to seek release at almost any cost; and as such release can be had for the flimsiest of reasons, the case is speedily adjusted by the action of the divorce courts.

How very true this is, daily experience shows only too plainly. A large proportion of the yearly output of our divorce courts arises precisely from these ill-advised marriages, and the readiness with

which divorces are granted increases, in its turn, the proportion of these marriages from year to year. Marriages are contracted between parties who have scarcely had time to form a bowing acquaintance. Chance throws them together; he admires her graceful form, she his manly bearing — it is love at first sight, and such love brooks no delay. Although the maiden have but just discarded her short dresses, and the youth be still a mere stripling, the "grande passion" stirs mightily within their bosoms, sets at naught parental objections, batters down judicial misgivings as to age, swears eternal fidelity, and then discovers that somehow it was all a mistake, which for the sake of private happiness and the public good must be rectified in the divorce courts almost before the traditional honeymoon has run its course. This view may appear extreme, yet it is borne out by facts of almost daily occurrence. Pick up any one of our daily papers, and in nearly every instance you will find there an account of some runaway match, matrimonial surprise for friends and parents, separation of husband and wife but recently married, and id genus omne. Statistics, as gathered from official records, show that over four per cent. of divorced persons had thrown off the matrimonial yoke before the end of the first year of their married life; whilst fully fifty per cent. obtained

a divorce within six years from the date of their marriage.

And whence does this terrible condition of things take its rise? Why, it is the evil fruit that has grown upon the tree of the so-called Protestant Reformation. When Luther uttered his famous dictum: "Marriage is but a worldly thing," he opened a Pandora's box that neither kings nor courts can ever shut. By one frantic leap society returned to the dismal state whence it had been drawn by the divine power of the world's Redeemer, and the irresponsible utterance of an apostate monk all but undid the work of the God-Man. If marriage be but a worldly thing, it need not surprise any one that men and women should gradually come to look upon this most sacred institution as a source of pleasant diversion, which one may indulge in to break the monotony of a work-a-day life: — that they should regard it as a business venture of minor importance. To make an investment, to buy and sell, requires thought, reflection, calculation; but to take a wife, or to accept a husband, may be left to whim and fancy, because if the venture prove a failure it may be terminated forthwith, leaving the interested parties free to try the experiment over and over again, until a match is made that gives satisfaction to all. And thus the mill grinds on, from rash marriages to

divorce and from divorce to rash marriages, an eternal seesaw of lust and cruelty the like of which has not been witnessed since the days of pagan abominations.

How utterly destructive all this is of domestic happiness and social morality needs no explanation. In a home built on lust there is no room for mutual love, self-sacrifice, and generous forbearance. In a home that may be wrecked by the whim of either party there can be no sense of security, no incentive to make of it a school of virtue and of sanctity. What trustful surrender can there be on the part of the wife, when even on her bridal morn she has reason to apprehend that her husband may some day cast her off for one who appeals more strongly to the cravings of his animal nature? What motive is there on the part of the husband to round off the angularities of his character, when he may look upon these very angularities as the means that will enable him to shake off the yoke that begins to gall? As the recognized necessity of spending their lives in one another's company frequently makes of the most self-willed men and the most petulant women good husbands and wives, so does the well founded hope of deliverance from uncongenial companionship often render the best disposed men and women altogether unbearable in their daily association.

Thus those sweet home virtues of patience, self-sacrifice, generous forbearance have no chance to thrive, and consequently the home itself is foredoomed to destruction.

Similarly, whilst these unholy conditions obtain, there is an end of social virtue and even of the common decencies of society. Love intrigues of married men and women no longer inspire that horror with which they have hitherto been regarded by the Christian world. They still remain, if you will, a sort of contraband diversion, which social etiquette requires to be indulged in only by stealth, but for all that they have a recognized existence, and as such they have lost their power to trouble the social conscience. It has all become a matter of affinity, and affinities, you know, are amenable to no law. If these things were to happen among savages, we would call them free love; but as we are civilized, and Christians to boot, we must needs use another name.

And what remedies can be applied to these evils? Well, there's the difficulty. It is easy enough to point out shortcomings, but to suggest effective remedies is quite another matter. In fact, as long as the present un-Christian view of marriage is maintained, the whole matter seems to be at a deadlock. If marriage is a merely civil affair, then civil authority must regulate it; yet

civil authority has little or no power to guide the consciences of men, and in this there is need of an appeal to conscience rather than to State laws. It is true enough, if the State absolutely refused to grant divorces, something might be effected; but by what means can the State be induced to take this stand, if it be held that marriage is but a civil contract? Even the State must be consistent, although that consistency means the ruin of society. Hence before there can be any serious question of applying effective remedies to the present chaotic conditions of the matrimonial world, society must be led back to the Christian concept of marriage. Men and women, and the State itself, must be brought to realize that marriage among Christians is not merely a natural contract, subject to the jurisdiction of courts and kings; but that it is a true sacrament of the New Law, and that as such it lies wholly beyond the reach of worldly power to make or mar. Without this, little or nothing can be effected.

It is because of these practical consequences, no less than on account of its theoretical truth, that the Catholic Church insists so strongly upon the sacramental character of the matrimonial rite. As long as matrimony is regarded as a sacrament, so long will marriage be looked upon as something sacred, which man may not abuse with impunity;

but the moment it is held to be a purely natural contract, it is like every other contract open to all sorts of abuses. If matrimony is a sacrament, and recognized as such by the contracting parties, then, as a general rule, men and women will contract marriage only after the most serious reflection and the most careful preparation; because their religious instinct enables them to realize without an effort that it is a terrible thing to trifle with an institution that sprang from the blood of the God-Man. On the other hand, if matrimony be looked upon as a merely natural contract, though of all others the most solemn and the most important, the average man and woman will give little thought to the serious consequences which it necessarily involves; because things merely natural do not appeal to what is highest and noblest in man's nature.

And why, then, are many Catholics little better in this respect than their non-Catholic brethren? Because they have lost their hold on the faith which they profess. Constant association with people of heterodox views, and neglect of religious practices, have made their faith inoperative, and so when a strong temptation assails them, they are readily induced to follow the ways of the world and not rarely become worse than infidels. They are exceptions, and as such they prove the rule.

HEART UNION

"One body and one Spirit; as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism." EPH. IV, 4, 5

When the forefather of our race, on beholding Eve for the first time, pronounced those solemn words: "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; . . . wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife," he not only enunciated, under divine inspiration, the indissolubility of marriage, but furthermore pointed to the natural reason underlying this indissolubility, which is the oneness of the two affected by the marriage contract. Hence he immediately added: "And they shall be two in one flesh"; that is, although two distinct personalities, they are nevertheless so closely united that they are practically merged into one. This oneness is not limited to the fact that they form one complete principle of physical life in reference to their offspring, but extends itself to the moral aspect of their lives, so that they must be one in thought, one in desire, and one in the ordering of their conduct. Theirs is by divine institution a

heart union as well as a union of bodies, and it is this that enables them to establish on earth that dearest, sweetest spot, which we call by the sacred name of home.

Now this heart union is conditioned not only by a certain congeniality of character and adaptability of disposition, although they also contribute much thereto, but likewise by the oneness of souls that arises from identity of religious belief and practice. There can be no perfect union of hearts where there is division of souls, and souls that are not united in oneness of faith must ever dwell in worlds apart. They have no common object of worship, no common source of inspiration, no common support in life's many trials. As Bishop Ullathorne so strikingly puts it, "in mixed marriages the souls of husband and wife are locked up from each other; they have no communion of thought or feeling in the chief concern of life. Think what it is to be never able to speak or act together in what concerns God, the soul, the Church, or the life to come. Think what it is to have no joint counsel or community of feeling in what concerns the spiritual welfare of a family. Think what it is to have one's faith shut up in the breast there to pine and faint for want of full and open exercise in the household and the family duties. How often are the visible tokens of religion removed to

avoid offense, whilst the faith is kept hidden from sight like some dangerous secret. Where are the family prayers? Where is the communion in the sacraments?" Yes, and where is the communion of hope in the calling of one faith?

It is partly for this reason that the Catholic Church is, and always has been, so strongly opposed to mixed marriages, even where from a merely natural point of view the prospective union leaves nothing to be desired. She hears ever ringing in her ears and repeats without ceasing to her children, the strong words of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "Bear not the yoke with unbelievers. For what participation hath justice with injustice? Or what fellowship hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God; as God says: 'I will dwell in them, and they shall be my people. Wherefore go out from among them and be ye separate,' saith the Lord, 'and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters,' saith the Lord Almighty." In these words the Apostle forbids all familiar intercourse of Christians with those not of the faith, and therefore necessarily the most familiar of all

human intercourse, which finds expression in the lifelong union of husband and wife.

Nor is this severe legislation peculiar to the Church of Christ; it was in full vigor in the Old Law, where God forbade His chosen people to intermarry with their idolatrous neighbors. For in Deuteronomy we read: "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them. Thou shalt not give thy daughter to his son, nor take his daughter for thy son. For she will turn away thy son from following me, that he may rather serve strange gods; and the wrath of the Lord will be kindled, and will quickly destroy thee." The Jews, therefore, were strictly forbidden to contract marriages that were likely to lead them away from following the Lord, and it can hardly be expected that in this respect Christian laws should be less severe. For among Christians matrimony is a sacrament, which it was not among the Jews, and as a sacrament it is representative of the union that exists between Christ and the Church, which is unintelligible without the foundation of faith and the bond of supernatural love. Hence it has been the consistent practice of the Church, even from the earliest ages, to forbid mixed marriages under severe penalties. Thus the Council of Elvira, held in the year 305, decreed: "If heretics will not enter the Catholic Church, the daughters of Catholics must not be

given to them in marriage. They are not to be given to Jews or heretics, because there can be no society between believers and unbelievers. If parents act against this decree, Communion shall be denied them for five years."

Aside from the want of perfect union between husband and wife, there is another and a much more cogent reason for the prohibition of mixed marriages. This is the loss of faith to which both the Catholic party and the children of such marriages are necessarily exposed. Carefully gathered statistics show that in the case of mixed marriages nearly seventy per cent. of the children, after reaching the age of twenty-one, belong either to no church at all, or do so only in name. In how many of these cases the Catholic parent gave up the practice of religion, I have not been able to ascertain with any degree of accuracy; yet if I may draw an inference from my own personal observation in this matter, it cannot be far from fifty per cent. Hence one-half of those who contract mixed marriages and two-thirds of the children are lost to the faith, which is a fact so terrible that it must strike even the most indifferent Catholic with dismay. For the loss of faith means the loss of everything, since to it must be applied those terrible words of our Blessed Saviour: "What does it

profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?"

But, you will say, how is this condition of things possible, as the Church exacts from the non-Catholic party a solemn promise to have all the children educated in Catholic religion, and in no wise to tamper with the faith of the Catholic party? Well, yes, that promise is exacted, and in most cases it is made, but is it always kept? Although it is embodied in a written contract, there is no legal way of enforcing it. Hence in nearly all cases where the Catholic parent is taken away by death, it is simply set aside and the children are educated in the religion of the surviving parent. In other instances, again, even if death does not intervene, the ante-nuptial promise is repudiated as soon as the wedding bells have ceased to ring; because the person who made it never intended to be bound by it after it had served his or her immediate purpose, which was none other than to bring about the contemplated marriage. And even if it be faithfully kept, the results are at best very doubtful. Catholics who contract mixed marriages are usually more or less indifferent as regards religious practice, and in consequence their daily association with one who is not of the faith almost necessarily tends to make them neglectful of even

their most sacred obligations. Hence, although they may not entirely give up the faith, they take little or no pains to instil it into the hearts of their children. They allow them to be sent to the public schools, they have no devotional exercises at home, suffer them to stay away from Mass on Sundays for the flimsiest of reasons, and thus they themselves prepare the way for the final apostasy that is almost certain to follow. Nay, even where the Catholic parent is without reproach, the unreligious example of the other parent is often quite sufficient to make the children lose their faith. For if the father or mother can do without religion, why cannot their children?

And if such be the case, why, then, does the Catholic Church ever grant dispensations? Of her own accord she never does, except in cases where she is morally certain that the faith of the interested parties is sufficiently safeguarded, and then only for grave reasons. Such cases occasionally occur, and then she acts as any prudent legislator would do, who admits an exception to the rule. In many instances, however, she is morally coerced by the evil disposition of her children, and then she wisely chooses the less of two evils. Thus when she foresees that the marriage will be contracted in spite of her prohibition, and then be nothing more than legalized concubinage, she prudently grants the

necessary dispensation, but the evil effects that may follow will be entirely on the heads of the contracting parties. She does not approve the unlawful deed, but suffering what she cannot help, she tries to diminish the evil by effecting what is good.

DISORDERS

"Woe is me for my destruction, my wound is very grievous." JER. x, 19.

The very fact that man is a social being entitles him to look to society for efficient help in the doing of his life work. For it is the well-being of the individual that counts in the final reckoning, and to this all associations of men must necessarily be subordinated. Circumstances may indeed occur which require that the temporal interests of individuals be sacrificed for the common good, but this is only by way of exception and is in itself intended to secure for the individual the attainment of a higher end. In this sense, society exists for the good of the individual, and not the individual for the good of society. It is, therefore, of prime importance that social morality be always kept up to the highest standard; for its efficiency in promoting the good of its individual members is necessarily in proportion to its own moral perfection.

Now, in this respect the present outlook is gloomy in the extreme. Social morality seems to be everywhere at so low an ebb that society, in-

stead of being a help, is fast becoming a hindrance to individual efforts. Be as optimistic as your sunny natures may prompt you to be in all your views; look out upon the social world with the trustful eyes of childhood innocence: yet if you are at all conscious of what is going on around you in every walk of life, you cannot keep out of your hearts and minds the terrible realization that the world is sick unto death. In political circles the lowest forms of venality are fast making many of our cities mere by-words of contempt; in the social order unspeakable corruption is flaunting its vileness in the full light of day; along economic lines cold-blooded oppression on the part of employers and lawless retaliation on the part of employés are fostering conditions of anarchy that must sooner or later end in chaos. Look where you will, if you have eyes to see, you cannot help beholding on all sides unmistakable signs of an impending catastrophy.

And here I would like to ask you, what are you going to do about it all? Will you let society go to the devil? If you do, you will go with it. It is true, indeed, that individuals can rise above the moral status of the society in which they live, but in practice the rule usually works the other way. As the old saw has it: Tell me with whom you associate, and I will tell you what you are. If we

are content to live in a society that is rotten to the core, it is more than likely that we ourselves will soon be in a gangrened condition. Hence our own personal interests, as well as the common good, make it incumbent upon us to promote the work of social reform by every means in our power. We must be up and doing. We glory in being Christians, but it is well to bear in mind that the Christianity which produces results is not of the passive kind; it is active, it seeks its opportunities, it goes out into the streets of the city, into the market place, into the council chamber, into the highways and byways of life, and with a stout heart fights with the Lord against the unwise. This is what we need to-day,— an aggressive Christianity, which contends for public morality as well as for personal holiness.

Is your Christianity of this kind? Let us take a look at it, and see what influence it exerts upon public life. In this we need not go beyond the limits of our own city, since the conditions which obtain here are practically identical with those of other large cities of the Union. According to the last census, St. Louis has a population of nearly seven hundred thousand. Of these, two hundred and forty-two thousand are set down as professing allegiance to the Catholic Church. This falls at least fifty thousand short of the actual number of

Catholics as indicated by the burial register, so that almost one-half of our city's population must be counted as Catholics. Now what influence does the presence of this vast multitude of Catholic men and women, who are supposed to be Christians par excellence, exert on the civic and social conditions of this city? To all appearances very little if any. In many instances our public offices are bought and sold as so much merchandise, and our Catholic citizens look on idly as if it were no concern of theirs. They may be good Christians, but they certainly have not yet learned the important lesson that good Christians must be soldiers as well as martyrs. Why, if every one of our Catholic citizens were to make a proper use of his right to vote, corrupt politicians would have to go out of business at the very first election. It is true, Catholics haven't a majority of votes, yet with the help of honest men belonging to other denominations, on whom in such an event they could undoubtedly count, they would be strong enough to place honest and capable candidates in every elective office. If they fail to do this, it is largely because they do not take that active interest in sound politics which both their religious and civic allegiance demand.

Again, some our newspapers and other publications are in the habit of printing articles that are not only anti-Catholic but anti-Christian in tone

and tendency, yet hardly a voice is raised in protest or a subscription withdrawn. Perhaps you will say, the defense of religion belongs to priests; they are the official guardians of the Church's interests and they must see to it that all unjust aggressors receive due reproof. Very true: but has it ever occurred to you that the priest is practically powerless if not backed up by the laity, whose subscriptions and advertisements supply these publications with the sinews of war? The priest may send protest after protest, and not an editor will heed them; but let thousands of lay readers threaten to withdraw their patronage unless an immediate stop be put to everything that outrages their religious feelings, and the effect will be instantaneous. If our secular press is largely anti-Catholic, it is principally because editors know from past experience that our Catholicism is of the passive rather than of the active kind. They may reverence us as martyrs, but they do not fear us as soldiers.

The same condition of things obtains in regard to social indecencies. Every moral outrage is ferreted out by ubiquitous reporters and then rehearsed in all its ghastly details to feed the morbid curiosity of a sensation hunting public. The scandals of the divorce courts are discussed with a freedom that might well cause a roué to blush, whilst salacious plays and immoral shows are ad-

vertised in text and illustration that set all rules for public decency at naught. Even the most sacred personages and events in the history of our holy religion are dragged upon the filthy stage to serve as pegs whereon to hang the blasphemous lucubration of playwrights who would sell their very souls for one round of popular applause. Perhaps a momentary outcry is raised, but that does little more than serve as an advertisement of the scandalous performance, and then the play is allowed to run its course until the devil is satisfied with his harvest of immortal souls. To enforce respect for religion and for public decency by the application of existing laws, or by the enactment of new ones if no such laws exist, is more than can be expected from the easy-going Christianity of this twentieth century. We surprise ourselves at times into a hue and cry, but we never forget our manners so far as to strike a vigorous blow. And yet we pose as soldiers of Christ!

Of course, no vigorous action along these lines is possible unless we ourselves can stand up before the world and say: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" If we ourselves need reforming, we should only make ourselves ridiculous by attempting to reform others. Their unfailing taunt of "Physician heal thyself" would frustrate our every effort. And if I am not much mistaken,

it is partly in this that our weakness lies. We have too many among us who are only Catholics in name. They are inscribed on the baptismal records, in their early youth they received the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation, perhaps they were even married by the priest; but there their Catholicity ends. Is this an exaggeration? So it may seem, but facts point the other way. When I consider that there are in this city over two hundred thousand men and women who are in conscience bound to hear Mass on Sunday, and then look at our churches and see some of them barely half filled with worshipers, and see furthermore that of those present at least two-thirds are women, I begin to wonder what sort of malady afflicts our Catholics on Sunday mornings, and especially our Catholic men. That large numbers of them do not comply with their most essential obligations is quite certain. Were all Catholics of this city, who have arrived at the age of discretion, to hear Mass on Sunday, as they are bound to do, our churches would not be large enough to accommodate the worshipers; yet as it is, in many of them half the floor space might be utilized for other purposes.

Now, that such Catholics can do little or nothing towards social reform is quite evident. They themselves stand sadly in need of reform. Nay,

in many instances they are the most corrupt specimens of the whole lot. They have betrayed their God, and as a consequence they do not hesitate to betray society if thereby they can promote their own selfish ends. Hence first of all, "Physician heal thyself," and then heal others also as there certainly is need.

VI

ECONOMIC QUESTIONS

COMMUNISM

"Neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed, was his own; but all things were common unto them." Acts iv, 32.

Closely connected with the doctrine of State Authority, although not necessarily flowing from it, is the question of Private Ownership of property. If the State has power to govern its citizens, to enact laws for the common good and to enforce their due observance, then it must in some way enter as a determining factor into the regulation of economic conditions. This, as is quite obvious, it may do either by owning all the means of production, such as land, factories, railroads, and then recompensing private individuals for their personal efforts, or by leaving the ownership of these means in the hands of its citizens and contenting itself with supervising their legitimate use as circumstances may demand. This latter condition of things obtains at present all the world over, whilst the former is aimed at by the ever growing party of Communistic agitators. And here the question arises, what position ought one to take in reference to these alternatives? Ought one to

defend the old system or make a trial of the new?

Before a reasonable answer can be given to this question, we must first take a good look at the Communistic system advocated by Socialists, so that we may clearly understand what it has to offer in lieu of present conditions. We are all sufficiently familiar with the present economic system, because we have seen it in operation all around us since our childhood days; but it is otherwise with this new system which Socialists strain every nerve to urge upon our acceptance. It is something practically untried and people's ideas concerning it are still rather confused. Many there are who see nothing in Socialism but a proposed scheme of industrial reform, advocating public ownership of street railways, means of cross-country transportation, lighting and power plants, telegraph lines, and similar public utilities, together with certain legal enactments in favor of the laborer, securing for him a shorter working day, higher wages, and public support in case of sickness, accident and old age. That such a view of Socialism is wholly inadequate ought to be evident from the fact that nearly all the reforms here enumerated are strongly recommended by men who are decidedly opposed to the Socialistic propaganda. These reforms are indeed advocated by Socialists, but they do not constitute Socialism.

What, then, is Socialism? What message does it have for the modern world? The answer to these questions we may gather from the Socialists' political platforms, put before the people at election times. As far as American Socialism comes in question, the Chicago platform of 1904 is very much to the point. Its opening paragraph reads thus: "The Socialist party, in convention assembled, makes its appeal to the American people as the defender and preserver of the idea of liberty and self-government, in which the nation was born." This, of course, is quite reassuring. According to their own testimony, Socialists are the defenders and preservers of liberty and self-government. "Old Liberty Bell," they tell us, "is cracked, and so is the liberty it stands for," and they are going to mend it,— not the bell, indeed, but liberty. And if we ask them how they are going to do it, they answer in the same platform, that, "as an American Socialist party, they pledge their fidelity to the principles of International Socialism, as embodied in the united thought and action of Socialists of all nations." What these principles are we learn from the definition of International Socialism, as given in the fourth paragraph of that same interesting document. The definition reads thus: "Socialism means that all those things upon which the people in common de-

pend shall by the people in common be owned and administered. It means that the tools of employment shall belong to their creators and users; that the making of goods for profit shall come to an end; that all the production shall be for the direct use of the producers; that we shall all be workers together; and that all the opportunities shall be open and equal to all men. The Socialist movement, therefore, stands for the freedom of the workers of all nations; and in so standing it makes for the full freedom of all humanity."

This, Mr. Debs tells us in his speech of acceptance, is the American expression of International Socialism. He also says, in that same speech, that American Socialists have ceased to repeat, to reiterate, to follow. Hence we might, perhaps, suspect that the American expression of International Socialism is somewhat different from the German expression, or the French expression, or any other expression; however, when we examine the Socialist programs of the different countries, we find that the difference, if any there be, is one of words only, not of principle. Present day Socialism, wherever it be found, is but a modification of the scientific Socialism introduced, some sixty years ago, by Karl Marx, a German Jew, who first turned Protestant and then became a materialist.

This, then, is the message of Socialism to the

people of the twentieth century,— the establishment of a coöperative industrial commonwealth, in which the whole nation shall be the sole owner of all instruments of production. Now by the instruments of production is meant whatever is in its use productive of an increase of wealth; such as real estate, raw material, factories, machines, means of transportation and communication, etc., or as some put it, everything not intended for immediate consumption. Goods, on the other hand, that are not productive, but perish in their use without yielding an increase of wealth, may be owned by private individuals. A similar distinction is drawn between money lent on interest and money locked up in a safe; the former is Productive Capital and may therefore not be owned by private individuals, whilst the latter is Idle Capital and as such finds a place among private possessions.

Hence, whilst the proposed new commonwealth is communistic in character, it differs widely from the old-time Communism which proposed to abolish every form of private property. The system advocated by modern Socialists does not abolish private ownership as such, but limits it to non-productive or Idle Capital.

In such a commonwealth, therefore, a person could not, strictly speaking, own a house, yet he might occupy a house as his own private residence.

He could not let that residence to obtain rent therefrom, yet he might dwell in the same to the exclusion of all others,— he might take his meals with his own family and die in his own bed. What is chiefly intended is to do away with competition and class distinction. The former Socialists remove by making all productive goods common property, and the latter they abolish by obliging all to work for their living.

Hence modern Socialism is a somewhat modified Communism, much more moderate in its demands than the Communism of half a century ago. Yet this notwithstanding, its aims are not reformatory but revolutionary. Its purpose is not to modify our present system of production but to supplant the same. What Socialists offer us in place of our present private ownership and competitive production is briefly this:

1. "Collective ownership of all means of production."

2. "Common exploitation of the productive forces, on the basis of free coöperative labor."

3. "A common coöperative product."

4. "This common product shall be divided into two parts. One part shall serve as means for further production, and for defraying public expenses,— this will be a sort of single tax. The remaining part is destined for consumption, and

will be distributed among all the laborers according to their share in the production, and will thus become private property."

Consequently modern Socialism is primarily an economic system, affecting directly only the production and distribution of goods, although indirectly it must needs modify the State, Society, the Family, and the Church. Its immediate aim is to effect such a modification of private ownership that every one shall be obliged to work for all he gets and get all he works for.

That the establishment of this contemplated commonwealth would be a most effective means of destroying monopolies and trusts, and other monstrous excrescences of unrestricted competition, is quite obvious; but it must not be overlooked that it would be equally effective in destroying every other sort of propertied interest. It not only bids the Standard Oil Magnates and Copper Kings to disgorge their ill-gotten wealth, but it also requires the millions of farmers and small tradesmen to hand over to the community the hard-earned money invested in their respective holdings. It not only snatches from the grasp of a few thousand millionaires their palatial dwellings and baronial estates, but it likewise takes away from every laborer his cherished ambition of one day acquiring a patch of ground and an humble dwelling which he may

truly call his home. Yes, the establishment of the Communistic commonwealth would certainly eliminate the thousand and one evils arising from unrestricted competition, but could it do this without at the same time destroying practically all that makes life worth the living? That's a question which must necessarily be answered before any one can reasonably embark upon the stormy sea of Socialistic agitation.

FUNDAMENTALS

"Fill the earth, and subdue it." GEN. 1, 28.

The bearing of the economic questions upon the work of salvation may seem a little farfetched, yet it is most real in more ways than one. These questions are not merely speculative but highly practical; they touch our daily lives both in relation to ourselves and the neighbor, and in this the work of salvation has its own proper field. We are not only called upon to make a decent living, but to make it honestly; to supply our own needs indeed, yet so as not to violate the rights of others. Hence when the alternative is put before us, whether we will defend the existing economic system or lend our assistance to the introduction of a new order of things, we must necessarily examine into the merits and demerits of each, so as to make our decision not only in accordance with our personal preferences, but with justice and prudence. It is for this reason that we shall now examine both sides of the question somewhat in detail.

First, then, as regards the existing system. As not a few Socialists maintain that Private Owner-

ship of the means of production is fundamentally unjust, we must first try to gather some clear ideas in reference to this point. Have private individuals the right to possess and exploit productive property? The answer to this question, as is sufficiently obvious, must be derived from a consideration of man's nature as it exists in the individual; for the demands and aptitudes of that nature are the foundation upon which his natural rights are based.

Now, the very first thing that strikes us when we begin to investigate human nature as it exists in the individual, is its rational tendency to perfection. Man is gifted with an intellect to know and with a free will to choose, and both faculties are capable of development along their own proper lines. In this he differs from the animal that eats its fill and cares not for the morrow. For him it is not sufficient to have wherewith to satisfy his hunger and to clothe his nakedness; his very nature demands that he should possess the means of developing his higher being — the faculties of his spiritual soul, by reason of which he is nature's king and not its slave. This requires that he should have seasons of leisure, not merely to recruit the failing strength of his toil-worn body, as is demanded even by beasts of burden, but also to devote himself to other pursuits, the immediate

remuneration of which is not a full dinner pail. Hence we find in every man an inborn desire to be financially independent, that thus he may have the power to dispose of his time and to use his energies as will best promote his own personal development.

In this we have the first intimation of nature's intentions concerning Private Ownership. For if it be conceded that man has a right to acquire and possess as his own, not only what he needs for the passing hour, but also what he may preserve for future use and enjoyment, and if, furthermore, it be granted that he may invest the price of his daily labor in such wise that it shall continue to bear fruit even as does the tree planted by his hand, then this first and necessary tendency of his rational nature finds its full realization: for then he is placed in a position to work for, and under ordinary circumstances also acquire, that naturally desired and highly important financial independence without which the development of his higher faculties is practically impossible. In the possession of these rights, he can work to-day and rest from his labor to-morrow; he can spend a portion of his time in acquiring a competency and devote the remainder to the cultivation of his higher self. His bodily wants are indeed of daily recurrence, but not so the necessity of foraging for the means of satisfying these wants. He is, therefore, at

least under normal conditions, enabled to rise above a mere animal existence — he is placed in a position to work for the attainment of the end appointed him by nature's God. He is rational in his work as he is rational in his nature, and the aspirations of his higher self find their realization in the harmonious development of his entire being. Theoretically, therefore, Private Ownership seems to be inculcated by nature's own teaching.

This same conclusion follows with equal clearness from the consideration of another fact quite patent to every thoughtful mind, namely, the necessity of providing for the wants of an unproductive old age, and for times of sickness, when in the very nature of things man is unable to exert himself actively for the supplying of his daily needs. It is conceded on all hands that, under normal conditions, man's bread-winning capacity is considerably in excess of his immediate wants. This even the most extreme Communists willingly grant — nay, they tell us that under their régime a work-day of two or three hours' duration will be amply sufficient to keep any laborer and his family in reasonable comfort. This claim of Communistic enthusiasts may indeed well be controverted, but the general statement, that the average working-man can produce more than is needed for immediate consumption stands unchallenged. Now, if

the laborer may possess permanently what he produces in excess of his daily wants; if he may run up a bank account, or invest his savings in real estate or in some business enterprise; it follows necessarily that he has it in his power to provide for himself and his family an independent existence, even for the time when the accumulated infirmities of old age or unforeseen misfortunes unfit him for active exertions.

And what is more, this is practically the only assurance of an independent existence he can reasonably fall back upon. Kind Providence may indeed have given him stalwart sons, who will count it an honor to repay with interest the care he bestowed upon them in their infancy; but this is of its very nature an uncertain quantity as looked forward to in life's early day. Such sons may never be his, or if they should be, they may be unable to provide for him and the partner of his life the care-free existence without which old age is at best but a burden. An old German proverb has it, that one father is better able to take care of seven children than seven children are to take care of one father, and in all too many instances experience attests the truth of that proverb. It is primarily, therefore, to his own efforts, as providing for future contingencies, that man must look for the possibility of an independent existence. Yet

his efforts to this effect will be unavailing unless he be allowed to own permanent and productive private property; for that the "common fund provision," of which Socialists speak, is not feasible we shall see presently in the discussion of that subject.

Then there is a third consideration which is even more cogent than the preceding two, although not quite so fundamental. It is the need we all experience of an incentive to exert ourselves, even in a matter of merely temporal concern. In a purely ideal state of things, it may be as attractive to work for the common good as it is to further one's own interests, but in the matter-of-fact world wherein we must bear the burden of life's day and its heat, it is chiefly the thought of personal advantage that exerts over men's energies a compelling force. It is mainly the *mine* as distinct from the *thine* that makes men willing to endure privations and to undergo fatigue — to wait in patience for the fruit of many years of plodding. The laborer who toils from morning till night at his ever recurring, monotonous task; the man of brains who conceives and leads to its final realization some grand commercial enterprise; the inventive genius who broods day and night over some labor-saving device — they are, one and all, as a general rule, sustained in their individual struggles

by the hope of some substantial remuneration, which will be all their own, to have and to hold or to dispose of according to their own individual taste. Upon this incentive the phenomenal material progress of the present age almost entirely depends. Our farmers and our mechanics no less than our coal barons and steel kings draw their inspiration primarily from this prosaic source. They may indeed have additional and higher motives to lead them on, yet the thought of the mine is for all that the master-key that sets the springs of their energies in motion. Throw away this key and inaction will be the inevitable result. It is, perhaps, a pity that it is so, yet so it is; so it always was, and so it ever will be, all Utopian dreams of Socialists and Communists to the contrary notwithstanding.

Now, this being the case, man as we find him — man as nature made him — needing permanent private property as an incentive to make him put forth his best energies; man as we find him — man as nature made him — needing permanent private property as an assurance of future independence; man as we find him — man as nature made him — needing permanent private property as a means to satisfy the wants of his higher nature: all this being as it is, the Right of Private Ownership forces itself, theoretically at least, upon our acceptance as

a necessary consequence of nature's most fundamental teaching. For the fundamental principle that man has a God-given right to satisfy the reasonable wants of his nature is of necessity unassailable, and as these wants can, ordinarily speaking, not be satisfied except by the possession of permanent private property, the right to such property is necessarily implied.

Nor can it be said that this right is limited to what is called Idle Capital, such as money that does not bear interest; for such a limitation is purely gratuitous. The mere fact, for instance, that a man improves a piece of property, which had not yet been preëmpted by someone else, must give him the right to that property to the exclusion of others. For it is only on this supposition that he can enjoy the fruit of his labor, and that he finds the necessary incentive to undertake the work of improvement. And if he can own landed property, then can he also own other means and instruments of production. For the raw material, such as ore and timber, is either found in or produced by the land, and if by his own labor or by the labor of others, for which he pays with his own money, he changes this ore and timber into workshops or machinery, where does his title-deed to such property reveal the slightest flaw? These means and instruments of production are simply the combined re-

sult of the productiveness of his land and of his own personal industry. Hence theoretically considered, the present system of ownership rests in every respect upon a solid foundation. Communists tell us, indeed, that the earth with its forests and fields, with its rich stores of coal and building material, with its mines of iron and copper and gold and silver, was intended by nature for the common possession of all; but this assertion is theoretically untenable. What kind of dominion individuals should exercise over material objects must, in the natural order of things, necessarily be gathered from man's reasonable tendencies, and these, as we have seen, are decidedly in favor of Private Ownership.

CLASS DIVISION

"But now there are many members indeed, yet one body." I Cor. xii, 20.

In the concrete conditions of human life, which must necessarily be taken into account in the solution of practical problems, it is not rarely found that theory and practice but ill agree. And the reason for this is not far to seek. Theory proceeds logically from given premises to necessary conclusions, whilst practice deals largely with factors that are not governed in their operation by any fixed rule. If human beings were mere machines, responding mechanically to the application of definite forces, the theoretical and practical aspects of life would be identical in their final results; but as they are endowed with a free will, which turns this way and that according to its own sweet pleasure, theory may point to one conclusion whilst practice works out quite the opposite. Hence in the solution of practical problems, theories can at best have but a limited application.

This finds its fullest verification in reference to economic questions. Thus whilst the fundamental right of Private Ownership, even as extended to

the means and instruments of production, is theoretically unassailable, there result from it certain practical difficulties that would seem to make for an altogether opposite conclusion. It is on these difficulties that Communists chiefly rely in their attacks on the present economic system. They tell us, and that not without a show of reason, that in practice the right of Private Ownership, as it is now in vogue, means luxury for the few and abject poverty for the many, and this itself should be sufficient to nullify whatever rights private individuals may seem to have along these lines. To allow men to invest their savings in productive property, such as interest-bearing capital, lands, mines or machinery, means nothing less, they will have it, than to put a premium upon covetousness and avarice; for thereby private individuals are enabled to divert to their own personal advantage what was intended for the subsistence of all. Thus the doors are opened to lawless competition, which of its very nature crushes the less capable, ruins small property holders, and reduces the wages of the laborer to a mere pittance. It is precisely owing to this, they contend, that we find the story of Dives and Lazarus reënacted all around us until the heart sickens at the mere sight of it.

I think we are all willing to admit that this objection contains more than the proverbial grain of

truth. Ever since Mammon became king, there has been an unwholesome accumulation of wealth in the coffers of the few to the great distress of the many. We must also admit that private ownership of the means of production makes such an accumulation possible, if not by fair means at least by foul. This is a fact that needs no proof and admits of no denial. But does this fact lend itself to the Communist as a valid objection against the Right of Private Ownership? Does it necessarily flow from said right, or is it merely the accidental outcome of an abuse? If it can be shown that it is a necessary result of Private Ownership, then the right of such ownership, however firmly it may be established in theory, may well be called in question as regards its practical application. For it is not conceivable that nature should intend the few to be clothed in purple and fine linen, and to feast sumptuously every day, whilst to the many are barely granted the crumbs wherewith to satisfy the cravings of their hunger. On the other hand, however, if this condition of things be merely the outcome of an abuse, it proves nothing whatever against the Right of Private Ownership. For there is not a single right in the whole range of nature that is not abused by evil-minded men, and the abuse of which may not cause far-reaching distress. It is not the abuse of any given system, but

the necessary abuse that militates against the supposed underlying right.

Now, if we investigate the connection of Private Ownership with the unequal distribution of wealth, we find indeed that inequality of some sort is the necessary result — not, perhaps, of Private Ownership taken in the abstract, but as considered in the concrete. For different men are differently constituted in regard to this matter. Some are energetic, industrious, clever, saving; whilst others are listless, lazy, inept, wasteful. If to-day a hundred men were to start in business under the same material conditions, it is quite certain that after the lapse of ten years very few would have even approximately the same amount of property. Some would possess more than a competency, whilst others would find it hard to keep the wolf from the door. In fact, nature has not made men equal in their capacity of acquiring wealth, nor does it seem to be nature's intention that such a dead-level equality should ever be established.

But whilst this is true, it does by no means follow that there are not certain bounds beyond which said inequality cannot legitimately go. For in the first place every man's productive powers are necessarily limited, whether we consider his physical endurance, his intellectual capacity, or the productive capital at his disposal. If he will be just to

himself and to his neighbor, he will find that even under the most favorable conditions his wealth cannot acquire such proportions as would make it a serious menace to the essential interests of his fellow men. For it is necessarily true in the case of every man, no matter how exceptional his productive capacity may be, that wealth is not an end in itself, but only a means to an end. Hence the greater a man's wealth becomes, the more wide-reaching also becomes his obligation of using it to the advantage of his less fortunate brethren. Not to speak of alms-giving, which is a right of none but a duty of all, there are a thousand and one calls which make the disbursement of his wealth, if not a matter of strict justice, at least a point of common charity. Consequently, if he follow the dictate of right reason, the limits of his wealth-gathering powers are much narrower than is usually supposed, and so the bugbear of social inequality need have but little power to frighten men of sound sense.

Of course, we are told, it is precisely here that the difficulty lies. Capitalists are the last men in the world to follow the dictate of right reason. They only look to their own advantage, and hence the multitudinous woes of our economic disorders. Daily experience shows that a man's lust for money increases with the size of his bank account, and

nothing in the world will ever keep him from lengthening that account indefinitely. He may spend a few million dollars in the building of public libraries or in the endowment of colleges, so as to add to his other possessions the reputation of being philanthropic, but that does not prevent him from enriching himself at the expense of others. If existing laws interfere with his money-making schemes, he evades them where he can, and where that is impossible he makes them inoperative by a liberal distribution of bribes. Nay, even if he be one of those unfortunates who cannot entirely rid themselves of what honest men regard as conscience, he finds ways and means to square himself even with that. Is it not much more reasonable that he should administer the country's wealth than to allow every Tom, Dick and Harry to squander it at pleasure? And if he occasionally causes others to lose the fruit of their labor, may he not consider his philanthropic donations as a fitting and ample restitution? Surely, his conscience will not condemn him, and the law can't reach him, and so he continues quite serenely to fatten on the purloined substance of the poor.

Well, supposing this to be the case, does that condemn the present economic system as impracticable? If men are so dead to all sense of justice as to stop short at nothing wherever their personal interests

are involved, is it at all possible to devise any economic system that will give satisfaction? Is it likely that these clever frauds, whom under the present system neither law nor conscience can restrain from dishonest deals, would be a whit more amenable to justice under any other system? If they now unjustly acquire wealth, would they not under the Communistic régime unjustly abstain from producing wealth? You may say that then they would be forced to work for their own living, but you forget that they might find ways and means to escape that necessity, as they find ways and means now to escape the necessity of being honest. Hence as far as persons of this description come in question, every economic system must prove hopeless in the end.

What, then, is to be done? Two things. First, allow the good God to have a hand in the ruling of the world which He Himself has made. If God be banished from the hearts and consciences of men, as He all too often is in these days of utter worldliness, you must not be surprised if the result be chaos. You cannot get along without God, even in economics. Next, enforce the laws that exist for the protection of right and for the suppression of wrong; or if existing laws do not meet the exigencies of the case, make new ones that will. If

this be done, the present economic system will be found to be quite practicable, and if this be not done, no system of any kind can ever be made practicable.

UTOPIAN DREAMS

"For neither was there any one needy among them." Acts iv, 34.

From what has thus far been said, it appears that the present economic system, based as it is upon the Right of Private Ownership, is perfectly justifiable, both in theory and in practice. That in its practical application it gives rise to many abuses can indeed not be denied, but these abuses result from the evil disposition of men rather than from the system as such, and therefore they must be reckoned with in any other system as well. Hence, although there is urgent need of reform along nearly all the lines of economic activity, that reform must nevertheless not assume the character of a revolution. Evils that have crept in must be eliminated, but the good which is inherent in the system itself must be carefully preserved.

This, however, does in no wise satisfy Socialistic agitators. Even such as freely admit that Private Ownership is perfectly legitimate, and their number seems to be growing, at least among the educated classes, nevertheless contend that in practice it is altogether inexpedient. The Right of Private

Ownership, they will have it, can at best only coexist with the Right of Common Ownership, and as this latter necessarily eliminates the abuses incident to the former, its claims should be paramount with all well-wishers of society. Hence, granted that the Right of Private Ownership must in itself be regarded as incontestable; granted also that the distress resulting from it is the outcome of an abuse; the very fact that this abuse, in spite of all legislation against it, becomes every day more wide-spread, is more than reason enough to suspend the actuation of said Right and to replace it by the equally fundamental Right of Common Ownership. For of two legitimate means, which may be employed for the attainment of a certain end, the safer of the two should always be chosen by a prudent man.

This contention is perfectly just as far as it simply asserts the existence of the Right of Common Ownership; for that such a right really exists is quite obvious. If any or all human beings agree to hold their property in common, there is nothing in the nature of things to make such tenure unlawful. Nay, its lawfulness flows as a necessary consequence from the fundamental Right of Private Ownership. For if a man has the free disposal of the property which he calls his own, as he necessarily must have, he is certainly at liberty

to make it over to the community, with the understanding, either expressed or implied, that he will retain his proprietorship only in so far as he is entitled to his share in the produce of the common capital. Hence in the abstract, and this is all that the foregoing reasoning implies, Communism rests upon the same foundation as Private Ownership; if, therefore, the one is just, the other cannot be unjust. In this we are perfectly at one with Communists, or Socialists, as they are popularly called, and if occasionally an issue is raised even in regard to this point, it is simply due to a misunderstanding of the fundamental principles underlying these respective systems.

What, then, stands in the way of Socialism as a practical system? Its impracticability. It can't be made to work. And first of all, it can't get a start. For how can all the means and instruments of production be made common property? Is there any possible way of persuading the present holders to make them over to the community? Only a fool or a dreamer would look for such a solution of this initial problem. If the Socialists' complaint of the selfishness of property holders is at all founded on fact, as in all too many instances it is, can any one reasonably expect that these same property holders will become all at once so unselfish as to hand over to the community all

that they possess? If employers can now barely be forced to pay just wages to their workmen, will they at any time be inspired with such unheard of generosity as to hand over of their own accord their mines and factories and lands and means of transportation, to be equally possessed by all as a common source of revenue? That would indeed be the greatest miracle this world has ever witnessed. Why, there is not one sane Socialist who expects anything of the kind. This, therefore, may safely be set aside as the dream of fools.

Perhaps you propose to buy up all productive private property, giving *quid pro quo* to the present holders. And where would you get the money? It has been calculated that if all the gold and silver in the world were turned into coin, it would not pay half the yearly interest on the enormous capital required for this transaction. That scheme, therefore, would mean bankruptcy from the very start. Of course, if you are a real up-to-date Socialist you will say that there can be no question of interest at all, since all interest-bearing money is classed as productive capital, and as such cannot be held by private individuals. Well, what then? Will the community meet its obligations to these expropriated property holders by part payments? That seems to be the only alternative, and is, in fact, advocated by many Socialists. But will this

alternative be acceptable, do you think? Suppose you were one of those unfortunates who had handed over a million dollars' worth of productive property to the community, would you be likely to acquiesce in the part payment scheme? As was pointed out in the preceding discourse, the Right of Private Ownership of productive property is unassailable, and consequently you are perfectly justified in demanding a reasonable interest on the value of your property handed over to the community. A million dollars at five per cent. would yield an annual income of fifty-thousand dollars, to which you have just as much right as to the capital whence it accrues. Are you quite sure that you would give it up without a protest? If you are, you are one in a thousand.

But let us suppose that by some miraculous intervention all property holders follow your noble example of unprecedented generosity, will that improve matters so very much? I think not. For if the community makes these part payments to former property holders, at least one-third of the population will thereby be enabled and justified to live in idleness, whilst the other two-thirds are obliged to work for their own support and for the support of these idlers. And this condition of things will continue not merely for a few years, but for generations and generations, until the community

has discharged its indebtedness. Hence the present condition of class division is to all intents and purposes perpetuated, but with this difference, that all its worst features are accentuated. Now these property holders are themselves producers, then they will only be consumers; now they inspire others to follow their example of thriftiness, then they will inspire them to emulate their idleness. How long will the Communistic commonwealth bear with this condition of affairs? Not for one year. A Communism that admits class division is a kingdom divided against itself, and fall it must.

Well, then, let us have recourse to general confiscation; that will effectually do away with class division. Yes, undoubtedly it will, but general confiscation is highway robbery. If Private Ownership is lawful, as we have seen that it certainly is, then any attempt to deprive men of the fruit of that ownership must be unlawful. Hence there is no way of starting your Communistic commonwealth except by an act of the most glaring injustice. But can you start it even in this way? Not whilst men remain what they are now and always have been. When we are attacked by highway robbers, we usually do not submit without an effort at self-defense, and what in this respect is true of individuals is true of the whole class. Any attempt at dispossessing property holders would mean war, and in that war

all the odds would be against the aggressors. Socialists, of course, tell us that in such an event there would only be question of overpowering a few thousand capitalists, but, as in most of their other calculations, they are sadly mistaken. Every farmer and business man, and all the members of the different professions, would instantly take the field against the army of socialistic despoilers. And mighty short work they would make of it, as they would not only be more numerous than their opponents, but also much better equipped. Blood would flow, and torrents of it, and then we would settle down to a state of class despotism the like of which the world has not seen since the time of Oriental absolutism. No, confiscation won't do; because it is a process to which people will not submit, and there is no power in the world that can force them into submission.

Consequently, however successful Communism might be when once in operation, its success must ever remain Utopian, because it can't begin to operate. But suppose it somehow were put into operation, would it be successful? It might, but only on this one condition, that every man, woman and child were to undergo such a radical transformation that henceforth they would find their chief happiness in promoting the interests of others. Then only could occupations and places of residence be

assigned without consulting the individual's preferences in the matter; then only could freeborn men and freeborn women be ordered about as slaves and yet experience the satisfaction of enjoying all the blessings of liberty. For that in a Communistic commonwealth individuals cannot be allowed to choose their own occupations or to select their own place or manner of living must be quite clear even to the dullest of us. If such privileges were granted the community would starve to death before the end of a twelvemonth, as all would choose "an aisy clane job," and the real work would remain undone; and yet without such privileges man is but a slave.

In fact, how so to assign the various duties that every one would be satisfied with the task fallen to his lot, and how so to distribute the common product that every one would receive his own share and nothing but his own, is a problem that no Socialist has ever yet solved or ever can hope to solve, although he had all the wisdom of Solomon. A hundred different theories have been proposed, yet upon investigation every one of them has been found wanting. Even with regard to the distribution of the product, which is certainly the easier of the two, not a single standard has yet been found that is not plainly impracticable, or that is at all acceptable even to Socialists themselves. The

standard of Time, the standard of Labor-time, the standard of Numbers, the standard of Diligence, the standard of Need, and many other standards, invented, discussed and rejected, strew the path of Socialist ingenuity through the years that are past, and will one day be gathered to erect upon the grave of Socialism its appropriate monument, whereon shall be engraven as epitaph the one word: "Folly."

If men were what they ought to be,— so industrious that they would rather work than be idle; so self-sacrificing that they would rather perform disagreeable tasks than pleasant ones; so unselfish that they would rather give than receive, the difficulty might be solved; but then there would be little need of Socialism. For in a society made up of such men the competitive system would work to perfection. On the other hand, as long as men remain what they are, and what they have ever been since they had to eat their bread in the sweat of their brow, the problem must remain insoluble, and the Socialists' earthly paradise will continue to be a Utopian dream. Marx indeed, the great "pathfinder of modern Socialism," expressed his firm conviction that at some future time work would cease to be a necessity and become an urgent desire, and his present-day disciples, faithful to their master's teaching, tell us that work will become

play and that men will swing the ax and handle the pick with as much enjoyment as the athlete now wields the bat or puts the shot; but what man or woman, who is not already a candidate for the lunatic asylum, is going to take them seriously on that point? Hence however poorly our present competitive system may work, it is nevertheless immeasurably superior to anything that Socialism can offer.

SOCIAL UNREST

"Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate: and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." MATTH. XII, 25.

If the establishment of the Socialist régime is so very unlikely, as in the nature of things it would seem to be, why bother about the agitations of a handful of Utopian dreamers? Why not pass them by in contemptuous silence, and leave the issue to the common sense of the people? Why should even priests raise their voice in solemn warning, as if there were nothing more important to engage their attention? Is there not a lack of consistency in all this counter agitation?

Alas, there is not! Little need be apprehended in regard to the actual establishment of the contemplated Communistic commonwealth; for powerful as the Socialist coalition may be, it will never succeed in the ultimate realization of its plans. The millions of land-owners and small tradesmen, together with the powerful capitalist class, are, and will ever remain, strong enough to resist successfully all attempts at expropriation, and without universal expropriation the Communistic com-

monwealth can never be established. But whilst this is true, Socialistic agitations are apt to create a condition of economic disorders that must prove ruinous to Capitalists and Laborers alike. The real danger with which Socialism threatens us is fierce class hatred, increased misery of the working class, and moral and religious ruin. It is this menace that must make every well wisher of society an outspoken opponent of the present Socialist propaganda.

How true this is, a brief consideration will make perfectly clear. First of all, the very life of Socialism depends upon the discontent of the working class. Where the laborer is satisfied with his present lot, Socialism can adduce no argument in its favor. Hence it has become a recognized practice among Socialists to use every means within their reach to fan the flame of class hatred. Exaggerated accounts of the iniquitous proceedings of trusts and of capitalists generally, coupled with harrowing tales of misery among the lower classes, fill the columns of their papers and give point to the harangues of their demagogues. They use the most specious arguments to convince the laborer that he is the only source of wealth, and that he is the very one who, under present conditions, shall never enjoy its blessings. As a result of these agitations, Socialist ideas are gradually finding their way into

the workingmen's unions, and labor troubles are fast becoming the order of the day. The number of yearly strikes goes well up into the thousands, and the loss in money and property entailed thereby amounts every year to more than three-million dollars. Many of these strikes are undoubtedly justified, unless indeed they be carried on in an unlawful manner, but many others would not occur were it not for the disturbing influence of Socialistic agitations.

That the Socialists' denunciations of present disorders have more than the proverbial grain of truth in them, no one can or cares to deny. Neither the political nor the industrial world can altogether wash its hands of the crimes which Socialists never tire of urging against the present system. Boodling, bribery, dishonest speculations, the crushing out of competition by unscrupulous means, are so prevalent that they must needs cause the gravest apprehensions. But it is one thing to condemn these abuses and quite another to exaggerate them for the purpose of feeding the flame of class hatred. Were Socialists intent merely upon condemning and remedying abuses that really exist, they would be at one with all honest men; but such is not their purpose. As W. Liebknecht, one of their recognized leaders, pointedly puts it: "Modern Socialism is the child of capitalist society and its class

antagonisms. Without these it could not exist. Socialism and ethics are two separate things." They surely are, because there is no warrant in ethics for the fomenting of social strife.

As Socialism fosters discontent among workingmen, so does it also feed upon their misery. Its policy, as Bebel puts it, is to "retain the wounds of the body social in a festering condition." Not, indeed, that Socialists delight in the sufferings of their fellow men, but because these sufferings serve them as a means for the attainment of their end. How well they succeed in this policy is, aside from all other patent facts, quite evident from the frequent recurrence of strikes. Every strike, whether just or unjust, entails hardships and want upon thousands. Any one who comes in contact with the working class knows what a strike means for the families whose bread-winners are thrown out of work. After a few weeks of enforced idleness their little savings have been spent, they find it almost impossible to buy on credit, and starvation is staring them in the face. When strikes are just, the resulting misery may be excused; when they are successful, the losses may to some extent be repaired; but when they are inaugurated simply to promote some Socialistic idea, as is often the case, and then in the end fail of success, as in nine cases out of every ten they do, they are nothing

short of being criminal, and their inevitable result is to "retain the wounds of the body social in a festering condition." Hence, however true it may be that Socialists ultimately intend to ameliorate the hard lot of the workingmen, such is not their immediate purpose; and it is only with their immediate purposes that we are concerned, for their ultimate intentions must ever remain Utopian dreams.

More ruinous still are the effects of these Socialist agitations in reference to morals and religion. That there are at present in the ranks of Socialism men of undoubted moral integrity and sincere religious convictions will hardly be denied, even by the most uncompromising anti-Socialists; but neither can it be denied by the warmest friends of Socialism that these good men are in decidedly bad company, and it is this bad company that does all the mischief. Socialism as such need not necessarily lead either to loss of faith or to loss of moral integrity; but the Socialism of flesh and blood that is stalking through the land to-day, and is carrying on its propaganda among our workingmen, is aiming at both. Socialists of this class will tell you that "religion is a private affair," yet they make it their chief business to pluck the last vestige of it from the hearts of the people. When the *New York Call* tells its readers that "religion is probably a nice fantasy for undeveloped brains, but not

for people advanced as far as to reduce every conceivable idea to a mathematical problem," it only rehashes the statement of Karl Marx, that "religion is a fantastic degradation of human nature," and of Liebknecht, that "Socialism must conquer the stupidity of the masses in so far as this stupidity reveals itself in religious forms and dogmas," and of Bebel, that "we wish in politics the republic, in economy Socialism, and in religion atheism." Nearly every recognized leader of the Socialist propaganda is an active antagonist of all forms of religion, and still they expect us to believe them when they say that in Socialism "religion is a private affair"? Either they themselves are fools, or else they believe that we are.

It has been said that Socialism, too, has a religion; and so it has, but that religion means the deification of man as the highest evolution of matter. Almost every Socialist paper and magazine teems with materialism, and so do the popular speeches and lectures of the Socialist leaders. No opportunity is passed by to impress upon the laborer that beyond matter and man there is absolutely nothing, and that those higher beings whom he has been taught to look upon as spirits "are but the fantastic reflections of his own self." To what can such continued dogmatizing lead but to utter loss of faith? And as it leads to loss of

faith, so does it also lead to loss of moral integrity; for these two go hand in hand. Now this loss of faith is precisely what the propagandists intend. The belief in an hereafter, where present wrongs shall be righted, does not fit in with their system. The more exclusively a man looks for his ultimate reward to the good things of this world, the more readily will he espouse the cause of Socialism; and to this do they direct all their efforts.

Hence, whatever may be said of Socialism when viewed in the abstract, there can be no two opinions about it when taken in the concrete, as it is fighting its battles all the world over. As such it is a menace to the best interests of the individual and of society alike. The rapid growth of Socialism may, therefore, well fill thoughtful men with alarm. Were the labor and trades unions to become thoroughly imbued with Socialist principles, we would be on the eve of a most sanguinary war between the masses and the classes — a war that would end, not in the establishment of a Communistic commonwealth, but in temporary anarchy, to be followed by military despotism. Nor is it at all unlikely that it may come to this, unless timely measures be taken to remedy present evils.

CAPITALISM

"And I say to you: Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity." LUKE XVI, 9.

When Socialists tell us that the producing class, or the laborer, "has only increasing economical uncertainty and physical and intellectual misery for his portion," their utterances are quite usually looked upon as an unwarranted exaggeration; yet under that exaggeration, for such it really is, lies concealed more truth than most of us are prepared to admit. Mr. Robert Hunter, in his very instructive book, entitled "Poverty," makes the statement that there are in the United States ten-million people who live in poverty or actual want, and of these four-million are public paupers. He states, moreover, that two-million workingmen are employed only from four to six months in the year, spending the rest of the time in the vain effort to secure work. Let us hope that this statement is overdrawn; and yet, even if it is overdrawn, there remains enough truth in it to give color to the Socialists' charge. No one, who comes in close contact with the lower classes, can deny that in the midst of our material prosperity there

exists extreme and wide-spread poverty. Much of this poverty may indeed be traced to the idleness, improvidence and dissipation of the workingmen themselves; but in many more instances must it ultimately be referred to unrestricted competition and to the unscrupulous greed of employers.

From this condition of things arises the most knotty of all modern questions, which in the economic world is usually spoken of as the Labor Problem. That this question is intimately connected with the Right of Private Ownership is quite obvious. For if men have a right to own productive capital, the Wage System, which is the root and source of the Labor Problem, is in one form or another the necessary consequence. It is said that by nature all men are equal, but this saying is only partially true. It is true in so far as men's specific identity and their consequent fundamental rights are concerned; but it is not true when their productive capacity and their resultant social condition or station comes in question. The energetic, the clever, the economic, even if perfectly just in their financial operations, will sooner or later rise above their less assiduous and less capable fellows, not merely in the acquisition of Idle but also of Productive Capital, and hence a gradual scission of society into Capital and Labor is the inevitable result. This development into class dif-

ference is so unfailing and so universal that it is at once recognized as the operation of a natural law. In different localities and at different times there may occur considerable variations in the processes that lead to the final result, but the final result itself seems to be an essentially invariable quantity. In the concrete this quantity finds expression in the Capitalist and the Laborer, in the Employer and the Employé, and their actual relation to one another forms the essence of the Labor Problem.

Hence it ought, first of all, to be sufficiently clear that this economic class division is in itself perfectly justifiable, since it is the logical outcome of nature's own doing. Consequently there is no need of trying to find the Capitalist's title-deed; it is identical with that of Private Ownership. As the owner of Productive Capital, he can, by promising a just remuneration, engage others to bestow their labor upon said capital, and thus derive thence a net profit. To deny this, after the Right of Private Ownership has been proved, would be to maintain that men have no right to sell their labor; yet without such a right human society could not exist, not even in a Communistic commonwealth. Hence whatever may be said against the Wage System as it exists in practice, its fundamental lawfulness cannot be impugned.

Whilst this, therefore, is necessarily granted, it can, on the other hand, not be denied that through abuse the system may become a source of great evil and of crying wrong. The very fact that a man holds in his possession the means of production, and consequently has the power to determine how they shall be used, places him in a position to take undue advantage of the needs of his fellow men. He may, indeed, not be able to go the whole length of his avaricious desires, yet in the majority of cases he is enabled to appropriate the lion's share of what is the joint product of his own capital and his employé's labor. This is more especially the case when he joins his forces with those of other capitalists, who all work for the attainment of the same end, which is all too often none other than their own private and personal advantage. Hence our present-day Trusts and Monopolies, and our endless varieties of Commercial Associations, all of which, with their thousand and one money-making devices and schemes, are appropriately gathered under the one general term of Capitalism. In themselves these associations may be perfectly lawful, and in very many instances they are, but they afford occasions of abuse that is simply appalling in the reach of its consequences. Even if the Socialists' claim, that in America eighty-five per cent. of all productive

property is held by a few dozen capitalists, be a gross exaggeration, it can nevertheless not be denied that the limits of just moderation have been long ago exceeded, and that great material injury and distress have thence resulted to the laboring class of our population. It is this that makes the Labor Problem a matter of such serious import, and that urges upon all the necessity of finding a speedy solution. A solution, we are told, must be found, or a universal upheaval will topple over our whole social fabric. This is likely enough, but how and where to find a solution? There's the rub.

In considering the solution of this problem, it must first of all be borne in mind, that Capitalism in itself is not the unmitigated evil that Socialists usually represent it to be. Like the Right of Private Ownership in general, it may indeed through human greed and injustice become the fruitful source of many and great social evils; but it is not such of its very nature. As long as just prices are maintained in the buying of raw material, and a fair wage is paid to employés, the coöperation of men of means is naturally an economic advantage to all concerned. It is a well-known economic fact, that production on a large scale, with sufficient capital to back the enterprise, considerably lowers the cost of production. Hence the margin of profit is necessarily greater than it would be if

the enterprise were run on a smaller scale. There are, of course, exceptions to this, but as a general rule it holds. Now if this profit were justly divided, giving to the employer merely a fair rate of interest on his invested capital, together with a just remuneration for his risks and personal efforts, it would naturally tend to raise both the price of the raw material and the wages paid out to the laborer, whilst at the same time it would lower the cost of the finished article and thus benefit the consumer. Instead, therefore, of being an economic curse, as Socialists represent it to be, and as in many instances it really is, Capitalism should rather be a source of universal blessings. By nature and nature's God it was intended as a means through which material advantages should become accessible to all; but like many another means it may be, and frequently is, perverted to an evil end.

Hence the solution of the Labor Problem is not conditioned by an indiscriminate condemnation of Capitalism, but rather by a proper supervision over and a just restriction of the same. As Capital and Labor must necessarily coöperate in order to make profit to either party possible, both have their inalienable rights to a certain share in the profits, and consequently the whole problem resolves itself into a just determination of these re-

spective shares. The moment a just division of profits is effected, the Labor problem will *ipso facto* cease to exist; and, on the other hand, as long as this division is made in defiance of justice, whether the balance be in favor of the Capitalist or the Laborer, no satisfactory solution can ever be reached.

This may perhaps become somewhat clearer if we briefly consider the titles upon which the respective rights of the Capitalist and the Laborer are based. First as regards the Capitalist, it is quite evident that he has a natural right to a fair rate of interest on the money which he has invested in the means of production; for that money is but labor in another form — labor performed either by the Capitalist himself or by those from whom he inherited his wealth. Now labor need not cease to produce the very instant that the physical act is complete; it may continue its productiveness indefinitely, even as the tree, when once planted, may go on bearing fruit after the hands that planted it have crumbled into dust. Next, he is entitled to an adequate renumeration for the time and labor which he gives to the enterprise in hand; because in this he but acts the part of a laborer, although he may use his brain rather than his brawn. Lastly, it is not more than right that he should receive some return for the risk which

he runs by investing his money in an enterprise that may, through some unforeseen mishap, end in failure. These are the principal titles that must be considered in apportioning to the Capitalist his share in the profits. They are all titles that are radicated in the very nature of things, and hence no positive legislation can ever set them aside.

Over against these claims of the Capitalist must be placed the considerations that entitle the Laborer to his share in the profits. His labor, whether skilled or unskilled, is an essential requisite to the success of the enterprise wherein his services were engaged, and consequently it gives him a just title to share in the fruits thereof. However, that this share cannot be the same for all is quite manifest; because all do not equally contribute to the sum total of the profits. The more skilled the labor is, the more productive it is, and consequently the skilled laborer is entitled to a larger share. Again, in unskilled labor as well as in skilled labor, the longer the workday and the greater the expenditure of energy, the greater also should naturally be the remuneration; because, all other things being equal, individual productiveness rises in the same proportion. Hence it may be said that the Laborer's first title to a share in the general profits consists in his productiveness. If he produces nothing, he is, ordinarily speaking, entitled to noth-

ing; if he produces more than his fellow workmen, he is in the same proportion entitled to more, whether his greater productiveness be owing to brain or brawn.

A second title may be found in the risks which the Laborer runs in doing his work. Life and limb, with their implied working capacity, constitute his capital, and to lose them means ruin to himself and to his family. Hence if his work be such that in doing it he necessarily runs a risk of losing his capital, he is reasonably entitled to a greater remuneration, no less than the Capitalist is who incurs the risk of losing his money by investing it in the means of production. This title is, however, in the very nature of things somewhat limited in its extension, as in many occupations the risk to life and limb is so inappreciable that it may justly be regarded as a negligible quantity.

It is upon these titles that the rights of the Capitalist and the Laborer to a certain share in the profits are based. They are most certainly valid; and hence the Labor Problem cannot be solved by setting them aside in either the one case or the other, but by giving them in both cases their full value and then making them the basis of the Wage System.

FAIR WAGE

"The labourer is worthy of his hire." LUKE x, 7.

That both the Capitalist and the Laborer are entitled to a just share in the general profits is quite obvious, since both contribute thereto something of their own; but it is not so obvious what precisely constitutes a just share. Considered in the abstract it seems to be a very simple mathematical problem, but when reduced to concrete conditions it is found to contain so many unknown quantities that a mathematical solution is out of the question. Hence in practice we can only make a moral estimate of what is fair to both parties. And even this moral estimate has its difficulties, as it must necessarily depend on circumstances which allow of considerable variations. In view of this, we are practically thrown back upon the general principle that the Laborer has a right to such wages as will enable him, at least under normal conditions, to live in reasonable comfort. This may be said to be the minimum wage, to which he has a right at all times. Whatever he may have a right to demand beyond this can be determined

only by the circumstance of each particular case.

The truth of this principle cannot be assailed, since it is necessarily derived from the fact that the Laborer no less than the Capitalist is a human being, possessed of all the rights and prerogatives peculiar to his kind. Were he only a machine, or a beast of burden, he could not demand more than to be kept in good working order; but as he is a reasonable being, who was placed here on earth to work out an eternal destiny, his rights go beyond the immediate demands of the material part of his complex nature. Possessed as he is of a spiritual soul as well as of a material body, he has an inherent right not only to a reasonable time for rest and recreation, but also for attending to his spiritual affairs and for some degree of self-culture, without which life loses half its value. Moreover, he has a natural right to become the father of a family, to have wife and children, and all that is essential to a Christian home. Now, as his labor is the only source whence he can draw the means necessary for leading such a life, it is quite evident that his efforts must be so well remunerated that under normal conditions they will supply him with these means. Hence the minimum wage to which the average laborer has a strict right is a family wage, that is, a wage which is

sufficient to keep a family in reasonable comfort. If such a wage is denied him, his natural rights are violated, and he is justified in using any legitimate means to force his employer to make up the difference.

Here the question naturally arises, how far the Laborer may go in enforcing his rights when they are violated by the Capitalist. Is it, for instance, justifiable on principles of natural rights that workingmen should form associations for the express purpose of keeping up their wages, or of shortening the hours of labor, or of removing any grievance which they may have against their employer? Can they for this end have recourse to strikes, boycotts, and the closed shop? These questions have been widely discussed of late years, and the common opinion of the most thoughtful men points decidedly to an affirmative answer. And necessarily so. For of what use would it be to the Laborer to have natural rights, if it were forbidden him to enforce these rights? Yet enforce them he cannot, at least not in most cases, except through means of this kind. In these days of fierce competition, the protests of single individuals count for little; it is only the demands of the many that can secure a hearing. Nor even this, except where it is backed up by effective threats of financial loss to the employer. Hence where

strikes and boycotts, and *id genus omne,* become for the Laborer an economic necessity, as they surely do at the present time, that necessity itself confers upon him the right to have recourse to said means.

By this I would, however, not be understood to imply that in the use of these means the Laborer need not look beyond his own interests. On the contrary, both justice and charity require that he have at the same time due regard for the interests of others. He is strictly bound to respect the rights of all concerned in the matter, whether of his employer, or of his fellow workmen, or of the general public. Hence he can, first of all, not have recourse to these means except after other and less drastic measures have been taken and failed. This is evident from the very nature of the case, since the means in question almost necessarily entail a vast amount of innocent suffering and at the same time cause considerable public inconvenience. Then, again, the object which he tries to secure must not only be lawful, but must be of such importance that the sufferings and inconveniences which he causes are slight in comparison. Lastly, he cannot make use of physical force, such as injuring those who wish to continue work, or destroying his employer's property. All he can do is to refuse his own labor or patronage, and to per-

suade others to do the same. In other words, he can use moral coercion, but he must abstain from physical violence.

Besides, it must not be forgotten that even moral coercion cannot always be resorted to as a means to secure higher wages. There is a well-known and universally admitted ethical principle to the effect that it is unjust to take undue advantage of the needs of one's neighbor. In practice it is not at all of rare occurrence that this principle is seriously violated. A glaring instance of such violation of justice occurred in St. Louis some years ago in connection with the Centennial Exposition. In one of the buildings the work had fallen so far behind that it could barely be finished on time, and when the workmen saw that they had it in their power to stop the work, because no other men could be had, they promptly struck for higher wages. They had all along been paid at a maximum rate, if I remember rightly, from five to six dollars a day; but nothing could induce them to resume the work except a raise of three dollars, making their daily wages about nine dollars in all. The contractor was at their mercy, and finally agreed to pay; but public opinion was not slow in condemning the strikers as unjust extortioners.

Precaution must also be taken against all unreasonable exactions, although they may not,

strictly speaking, be unjust; for such exactions can only serve to bring the Unions into popular disfavor and thus defeat their own ends. Cases of this kind occur so frequently that it almost appears as if the Unions were bent upon using their power indiscriminately for good and for evil. Here is a case in point. A carpenter had bought himself a house and lot, and as there was no fence around his newly acquired property, he very reasonably concluded that he might as well employ his Saturday afternoons in fence-building. Of course, the Union had decided that no work must be done on Saturday afternoons, but he consoled himself with the thought that Unions were made up of reasonable beings, who would not prevent a thrifty man from doing his own work. So he started building his fence; but he had not proceeded very far when one of the Union's business agents peremptorily ordered him to desist, on the plea that it was against the rules of the Union to work on Saturday afternoons. "But this is my own property," pleaded the unlucky carpenter, "and I have no other time to do it in." "That makes no difference," came the agent's answer; "you can employ some one to put up your fence during working hours; now you take your wife and children to the park for an outing; that's what Saturday afternoons were made for." It is not for me to record

the carpenter's comment on the Union's interest in the welfare of his family; but any man of common sense may easily supply the unrecorded words. I am sure they were brief and to the point.

And here it might be asked, whether these various means employed by the workingmen, even if used discreetly and to the best advantage, will lead to a satisfactory solution of the Labor Problem. I hardly think so; at least not to a solution that is satisfactory in every respect. There is too much militarism about it to give any well-founded hope of a final settlement. It is still Capital versus Labor and Labor versus Capital, instead of being a natural union of the two. What is wanting, and what must be secured before all else, both in the Capitalist and in the Laborer, is a deep sense of justice, which does not look to momentary expedience but to enduring fairness. Reform must be insisted upon, both as regards the acquisition of private property and its subsequent use; but that reform cannot be entirely derived from extrinsic sources. Labor Unions can effect something, and State Legislation can effect something, but neither the one nor the other, nor the two working in unison, are equal to the task of permanently remedying present abuses. If both Capitalists and Laborers were in every respect law-abiding citizens, the problem would be simple enough; but being

what they are, all too often blinded by considerations of self-interest, there necessarily arise complications that go beyond the wisdom and power of man to control.

Hence when all is said and done, we are compelled to acknowledge that there is need of a higher power to work out a final solution. A radical change for the better can be effected only by a transformation of men's hearts — a transformation which will cause men to understand practically those significant words of our Blessed Saviour: "What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" In the same proportion as men lose sight of the eternal, do they fall into error concerning the temporal; and hence there is little hope of remedying our present temporal disorders until that happy day shall come, when men will value the things of time as they appear in the light of eternity. Success in this line, as in every other, depends on the interest which men take in the one great Business of Salvation.

THE END

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